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The Apostles' Creed

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The Apostles' Creed

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By David James Burrell

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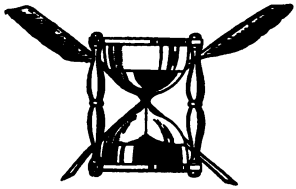
The Apostles' Creed

By

David James Burrell, D.D., LL.D.

Author of "We Would See Jesus," "The Home Sanctuary," "The Evolution of a Christian," etc.



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The voice of Monica
Calls to thee from Paradise, "Augustine, come:
Lo, at the gates of day
Thy destined home!"

What though the tempest roar
In fury round thy Church's tottering wall?
From the eternal shore
Her voice doth call.

The Master Architect
Will shield, against the advancing gates of Hell,
The Church of his elect
He loves so well.

He died to lay that stone,
Elect and precious, bathèd in his life-blood,
That it may stand alone
Against the flood.

In waves the quicksands swim:
Fear not the Syrtes' shift, the tempest shock:
Thy faith is built on Him
Who is the Rock.

— Saint Augustine, A. D., 430.

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INTRODUCTION

The most important things in our experience are commonplace; for example, home, and daily bread, and mother's love. We are sufficiently informed about them; yet — and possibly for that very reason — we fail to appreciate or duly emphasize them.

So it is with the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, which we have repeated ever since we learned them at our trundle-beds. They are like coins passing from hand to hand until they lose the image and superscription of the king.

In like manner the thoughtless repetition of the Apostles' Creed is likely to dull our apprehension of the tremendous truths involved in it.

Let it be observed, at the outset, that the Apostles' Creed is not really apostolic. The liturgical churches hold and affirm that its Twelve Articles were written by the twelve apostles, each of them contributing one. The most careful investigation, however, has not traced the symbol in its present form beyond the year 450.

Observe, also, that it is not inspired.* There is only one document in the world that is inspired; namely, the Bible, which claims to have been "writ-

* In the original the word inspiration is *Theopnustia,* which means literally "breathed of God."

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ten by holy men as they were moved by the Spirit of God." It is not claimed for any of the great formularies of the Church — such as the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Thirty-nine Articles — that they were written in that way.

This does not signify, however, that the Apostles' Creed is without a very definite value. There are good and sufficient reasons for regarding it as a most important contribution to the spiritual welfare of the Church and to the upbuilding of all true followers of Christ.

To begin with, it serves as a *Manual or Compendium of Religious Truth.* It may be likened to the digest of the Roman Law which was compiled in the sixth century by order of the Emperor Justinian and known as the Justinian Pandect. No lawyer would for a moment regard this *corpus juris civilis* as a substitute for the great body of the Roman Law; but it serves as an indispensable guide, table of contents, or summary of it.

So the Apostles' Creed is not to be taken as a substitute for Scripture. The man who allows a prayer-book or Confession of Faith or anything else to take the place of his Bible is inviting an impoverishment of soul. Our Lord said, "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me." The two things here indicated, namely, Christ and

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Life, are to be found in Scripture as at the fountain-head.

The probability is that the Apostles' Creed was originally based upon the baptismal formula, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We find accordingly that it falls naturally under three heads. First, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"; second, "I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord"; and third, "I believe in the Holy Ghost" as the Executive of the Church. It thus binds us to an implicit faith in the Triune God and to all the great verities which center in Him.

It is valuable also as *a Resultant of the Controversies of the Early Church.* The first centuries of the Christian era were characterized by doctrinal debate. The Church believed but had not as yet formulated its belief.

It is natural that we should lament the heresies of our time: although, in point of fact, there is no modern heresy which was not current in those early days. The denial of the personality of God, of the deity of Christ, of the influence of the Spirit, and of the truth of Scripture were all discussed pro and contra in the early Councils; and the Apostles' Creed marks the conclusion arrived at by the fathers in these premises.

It does not follow, however, that we are absolved from the individual responsibility of determining upon the doctrinal questions at issue. Human na-

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ture must be reckoned with as a constant factor in the disposition of things. The experience of the gray fathers does not prevent the children from "ganging their ain gait." It is always in order, therefore, to call for the previous question.

The fact that a dwarf — the Present — can see further than a giant if he stand on the shoulders of the Past, is no stumbling-block in the way of a willful schoolboy who insists on proving the axioms. Tell him that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, and he will want to know why. Tell him that if he puts no confidence in the self-evident truths of geometry he will never reach the *Pons Asinorum,* and he will persist in his original investigations as ardently as many do who place no value on the results of past controversies with respect to religious truth.

It thus appears, further, that the Apostles' Creed is valuable as *a Standing Memorial of the Ancient Faith.* It is the foundation upon which the early Christians built the superstructure of their heroic lives. Their belief is here reduced to its lowest terms.

A subscription to this formula was required of novices on entering the Church. Is there not a peculiar sacredness in a document with such associations? The words which we oftentimes too lightly and thoughtlessly repeat fell reverently from the lips of those who worshiped in catacombs and lonely conventicles at peril of life. This was their

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confession of faith as they passed through the gateway of the Colisseum to be "ground as God's fine wheat by the teeth of lions."

Furthermore, this Creed is valuable as a *Permanent Test of Orthodoxy.* I am aware of the fact that the word "orthodoxy" is offensive to many in these days. It has been put in the stocks, with its face smeared with phosphorus, for the derision of passers-by; nevertheless it is a blessed, blood-stained word. It means "straight teaching." Why then should we shrink from it? The word is a synonym for honesty in pulpit and pew, since it stands for loyalty to ordination vows and fealty to the teaching of Christ.

Again, this historic symbol is valuable as *a Source of Spiritual Power.* The man who believes is the man who does and who wins out. "All things are possible," said Jesus, "to him that believeth." Here is the secret of a successful life: "According to your faith be it unto you."

The man who believes is the one who invents and discovers, plans, executes and makes good. He leads armies across the Alps and builds roadways to connect the remote ends of the earth. He undergirds the seas and navigates the skies.

An agnostic dreams no dreams and sees no visions; he banks on nothing that lies beyond the circumspection of his finger-tips, goes out after no Eldorados and accomplishes nothing worth speaking of.

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Tell me what you believe and I will tell you what you amount to. If you believe in gold as your *sine qua non,* you will pursue it until your soul turns yellow. If you believe in pleasure as the one thing needful, you will keep on chasing butterflies and thistledown as if there were nothing else worth living for. If you believe in the emoluments of worldly honor with all your heart, you will move heaven and earth to crown yourself with laurel that will fade at sunset. For belief is the thing we live by.* "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

By the same token, he who really believes in God as his Father will be pervaded by the sense of God. He who really believes in Christ as his Saviour will hold him first, last, midst and all in all. He who truly believes in the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier will be "coy and tender to offend," ever watchful lest by sin he grieve Him.

Finally, the Apostles' Creed is important as a substantial *Basis of ultimate Union among the various branches of the Christian Church.* In this simple Confession of Faith we have, indeed, a platform upon which the evangelical Denominations are standing to-day. However they may differ as to minor matters, they are knit together in one Lord, one Faith, one spiritual Baptism, one God and Father of all. Church union is a fact accomplished in the great enterprises at home and abroad which make

*The word "belief" is by some derived from *by-lifian,* meaning "to live by."

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for the spread of the gospel and the ultimate reign of the Saviour in this world of ours.

The question has been raised whether we are losing our faith in these days. Oh, no; impossible! A man may lose a spurious faith or an empty and superficial confession of faith; but not genuine faith. For faith gets hold of the innermost fiber of one's being; it has such a vital grip on mind and conscience and heart and sovereign will that to lose it would be as impossible as to live without a beating pulse. The faith that can be lost is not worth keeping; one is better without it.

The pronoun "I," with which the Creed begins, commits us to a personal appropriation of its truths. Its last word, "Amen," sets the seal of sincerity upon our affirmation: as if one said, "So be it in my walk and conversation; so be it in all my relations with God and my fellow-men." We are thus bound in solemn covenant to prove our faith by our works, which can only be done by translating our Creed into the familiar terms of life.

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Section I

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

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ATHANASIUS CONTRA MUNDUM

They call me hasty, of opinion proud,
  Untaught to bend a stubborn will;
Ah! little dreams the shallow-hearted crowd
  What thoughts this bosom fill,
What loneliness this outer strength doth hide,
  What longing lies beneath this calm
For human sympathy so long untried,
  Our earth's divinest balm.

But more than sympathy the truth I prize;
  Above my friendships hold I God;
And stricken be these feet ere they despise
  The path their Maker trod.
So let my banner be again unfurled,
  Again its cheerless motto seen:
"The world against me, I against the world!"
  Judge thou, dear Christ, between!

—*Huntington.*

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

"I"

SO then, at the outset, this is an individual matter. Alone I came into the world; alone I make my journey over the undulating country called Life; alone I must pass on into the Beyond; alone I must stand at the judgment bar of God.

It follows by inevitable logic that I must for myself alone lay down my platform of principles for guidance along the way.

The difference between I and we — between *credo* and *credimus* — is the difference between a man and a manikin in a crowd. Which is better: to be swept along by fashion — thinking, believing and acting as others do — or to stand braced against the rock of personal conviction and let the crowd sweep by?

In the ninth volume of Bancroft's "History of the United States" we come upon this passage: "The most stupendous thought that ever was conceived by man, such as had never been dared by Socrates or the Academy, by Aristotle or the Stoics, took possession of Descartes in his meditations on a November night on the banks of the Danube. His mind separated itself from everything besides and, in the

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consciousness of its own freedom, stood over against tradition, all received opinion, all knowledge, all existence except itself, thus asserting the principle of Individuality as the key-note of all coming philosophy and political institutions. Nothing was to be received as truth by man which did not convince his reason. A new world was opened up in which every man was to be his own philosopher."

That "new world" is the world we are living in. The first and greatest commandment is, Think; think for yourself; let no man do your thinking for you. There are people to-day, as in Cowper's time, who farm out their thinking and follow on,

"Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of their leaders' bells."

But, good people, by the divine franchise of manhood let no man or body of men, no priest, caucus or Sanhedrin, do your thinking for you. Quit you like men!

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"BELIEVE"

A MAN without a creed is a mere makeshift sort of man.

The word "creed" is from *credo,* meaning "I believe." And the word "belief" is traced to the Saxon *by-lifian,* meaning "the thing we live by."

The reason why nobody believes in a man who believes nothing is because faith is the substratum of life. Thus it is written: "As a man thinketh within himself, so is he."

A grocer who does not believe that it takes sixteen ounces to make a pound soon puts up his shutters. A candidate with no definite opinions as to the fundamental principles of government, though he may succeed for a while as a demagogue, is doomed to failure in the long run.

But if a well-formulated code of facts and principles is necessary in these common walks of life, how much more in the province of religion in which are involved the issues of the eternal ages!

There is a difference between knowing and believing. One may know much and believe little, and *vice versa.* A man may know that "honesty is the best policy," but unless he is an honest man he does

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not believe it. A citizen of New York may know that municipal righteousness is a desirable thing, but unless he casts his ballot accordingly he does not really believe it. Moses knew, beyond all possibility of doubt or peradventure, that God spoke to him from the burning bush; and he showed that he believed it when, in obedience to the divine command, he stood up in the audience chamber of Pharaoh with his commission on his lips: "Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go!" The prodigal knew from the beginning of his downward career that in his father's house there was plenty and to spare, but his knowledge was not vitalized and transmuted into faith until he said, "I will arise and go."

The touchstone of orthodoxy is not knowing but appropriating. The confessor who says, "I believe in Christ," and does not worship and follow him in labor of love and patience of hope, is no better than a lay-figure. His creed is as empty as a last year's cocoon. This is that "faith without works" which, being dead, is no faith at all. In other words, belief must be resolved, amplified and converted into terms of common life.

This is what Christ meant when he said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye have not life in yourselves."

As food is without value unless it be assimilated and transmuted into blood and sinew and physical energy, so our knowledge of Christ and of the spiritual truths which radiate from him is as mean-

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ingless as a painted ship upon a painted ocean except as it finds its way along the vital tissues of the soul and is transmuted into the practical graces of character and usefulness. It is thus that our lives become "hid with Christ in God."

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"IN GOD"

WE were made in the divine likeness: wherefore we cannot help believing in some sort of a god.

In Irving's "Life of Columbus" he says that when the great explorer landed on the islands off the American coast he found the rude inhabitants, as he supposed, without any conception of God; but presently he discovered that they stood in mortal terror of an infinite Being with whom they had communion through the mediation of little images, called Zemes, which they wore about their necks.

But this does not mean that everybody believes in God. For while there are many gods there is only one true God.

He must be one, for the good and sufficient reason that he filleth all in all. There is room for no other in the universe. His presence and power so occupy time and space as to exclude all others.

It is said of him that he "inhabiteth eternity." He is the sempiternal One, eternal both backward and forward; as it is written, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." His lifetime is the eternal Now.

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The earth is full of his glory. As there can be only one King in England, one Emperor in Germany, one Czar in Russia, and one President in our Republic, so in this world of ours there can be only one sovereign God.

The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. The eyes of angels and archangels are all alike directed toward the central throne; and all voices unite in ascribing to its Occupant glory and honor and power and dominion for ever and ever.

Any other than this God is a false god; and to worship such is idolatry. The definition of idolatry is "The worship of any other than the true God."

To the children of Israel at the foot of the flaming mountain God announced himself on this wise: "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

It was a custom among the more scrupulous Jews to wear a frontlet between their eyes, called a "shema," to keep them in perpetual remembrance of this fact. On it was inscribed the legend, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt have no other gods before me!"

The true God has revealed himself to men.

It is antecedently probable that he would do this. If he is a Father and we are really his offspring, it goes without saying that he would not leave us groping in the dark to find him.

He has revealed himself in nature. "One dande-

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lion seed," says Professor Chadbourne, "has power enough to cut up all the atheism in the world by the root." But while nature reveals the being of God, in doing so it "speaks a various language"; and as to his character, and particularly as to his grace, it has little or nothing to say.

He has revealed himself also, and more completely, in Christ. It was to this end that the only-begotten Son of the Father came into the world, that in him we might be able to form a just and adequate conception of God. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. How sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"

It is not enough, however, that God should thus reveal himself in Christ. Is that an unwarrantable thing to say? A moment's consideration will justify it.

Christ lived in a remote corner of the world for a brief period of thirty years and then went his way. He was indeed a full and complete unveiling of God; but, in the necessity of the case, he could be so practically only to such as knew him. If no provision had been made for extending the knowledge of his wonderful life over all lands and throughout all ages, the probability is that none of us would ever have heard of him. For this reason the Scriptures

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must needs be given to perpetuate and universalize the knowledge of him.

In 1853 Commodore Perry went to Japan as a commissioner of the United States to open up commerce with that country; but when he cast anchor in the harbor of Yeddo, the Mikado refused to receive him. He was required to produce his official credentials before he could gain a hearing. That being done, a treaty was duly effected. But that treaty would have been of no avail had the proceedings been arrested then and there. The treaty must be reported, ratified and made a matter of public fame. This also was done; whereupon the visit of Commodore Perry to Japan became a living part of history and an important factor in the subsequent welfare and prosperity of Japan by bringing her into touch with Christian civilization.

The Son of God, coming into the world, had behind him the Old Testament, which, as a summary of his Messianic credentials, set forth prophetically his mission as the Saviour of men. And when, after his passion, he returned to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was," he left behind him in the New Testament a complete record of his life, character and work. In these two Testaments, constituting the Scriptures, we have a full, final and authoritative setting forth of Christ as the manifestation of the one true God.

But what of those who have no Bible? Is the light of nature sufficient to reveal God?

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It is at best a dim and ineffective light, owing to the fact that sin has warped our vision. There is a twist in every pair of human eyes. But God is not an exacting God; he demands no more of any man than that he shall bring his life up to the measure of his light. Do the heathen thus live up to their light?

"They are without excuse," says Paul, "for the invisible things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity. . . . Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks, but became vain in their reasonings and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man. . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

As to the truth of that statement, the pantheons of the world are in evidence. The gods of Olympus and Walhalla are mere images of men magnified and projected on the skies.

It would be hard to find anything more pathetic than the grim irony of Isaiah in his picture of an idol-maker. He shows him going out into the forest to seek a suitable tree, a sound-hearted tree "that will not rot." He brings this to his workshop, and there "stretcheth out a line: he marketh it out with

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the compasses, and shapeth it after the figure of a man." Presently, being hungry, he gathers the chips and shavings and "kindleth it, and baketh bread; . . . he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm!" And then he falls down before "the residue" of the fir-tree and "prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my God!"

In like manner Paul, in his address to the people of Athens — a city "full of idols," whose streets were lined with colonnades of images — put his hearers to shame, saying, "In God we live and move and have our being: as certain even of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and device of man."

It is comparatively easy thus to expose the absurdity of image-worship; but how about those who, having the Bible, have either ignored its theology or lost faith in it? Are there idolaters among them?

Surely; if the right definition of idolatry be "the worship of any other than the true God." For what difference does it make whether a god be made out of the brown earth or out of the gray matter of the brain? If it is a fabricated thing and not conformable to the God who has revealed himself, then "the workman made it, and it is no god."

There are those who speak guardedly of "an original first cause." The materialistic scientists of our time are accustomed to characterize their god

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in that way. Finding it impossible to bar God absolutely out of his universe, since the present order of things must somehow be accounted for, they reduce him to the lowest possible terms of Law, Force, the All-pervading Soul, or the Potency of Life. Who made this god? The Evolutionists, who, tracing the existing order back through the calm operation of natural laws for an indefinite period, came at length upon a primordial germ. But — who made that primordial germ? As between God and chance, they choose to refer this remote origin of things to some sort of a god. He is the indispensable *Deus ex machina;* that is all.

There are others who, approaching the argument from the ethical standpoint, find it necessary to hypothecate a god in order to account for our moral conceptions. The best definition of this god of the philosophers is "a something not ourselves that maketh for righteousness." Who made that god? A clever workman named Matthew Arnold made it; therefore it is not God. He, too, found himself driven into a quandary; which he solved by writing on his altar: "A Something." This is only another form of the Athenian inscription "To an Unknown God."

There are others who conceive of God as Justice, pure and simple — calm, inflexible, inexorable Justice; whose all-comprehensive law is written in the terms: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is, then, no such thing as the par-

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don of sins. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" This is Karma, "the law of consequences." Who made this god? The Buddhists, and like-minded devotees of justice without mercy. But this is not the God who has revealed himself in Scripture to the children of men. This is an idol; and none the less so because it is made not of "gold or silver or stone, graven by art and device of man," but of the human imagination. There is no such god anywhere in the universe.

And still others conceive of God as nothing but love. Is it not written, "God is love"? Yes, but nowhere is it intimated that God is nothing but love. To speak of him as a good-natured being — *Bon Dieu* — who has no possibility of holy indignation in his nature, who can look upon sin and all its attendant abominations with complacency, is strangely illogical. The least that could be expected of God is that he should be as perfect as an ideal man. But if a man were constructed on the lines of this weak caricature it would be impossible for us to respect him. Who made this lop-sided, amiable god? The sentimentalists made him. And all sound thinkers, not to say devout worshipers, are bound to reject him. For "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." His character is a perfect symmetry of all right attributes. To reduce him to one attribute only is to make a monstrosity of him.

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The practical question, however, is this: Where did you personally get your God? Out of current opinions? Out of your inner consciousness? Out of some personal prejudice in favor of this or that? Then you, yourself, are the workman; you made it, and it is not God.

If we would avoid idolatry, it behooves us not to go groping after God like blind men, but to betake ourselves to the Oracles where God speaks for himself. If, having the Scriptures, the revelation, the showing forth of God in his many-sided character, we bow at false altars and worship gods made by human hands or imaginations, we have none to blame but ourselves.

In the middle of the last century Sir David Brewster went to Paris to visit his friend Arago, the astronomer, who was finishing the long and eventful circuit of his life. Of their interview he says, "We conversed on the marvels of creation; and the name of God was introduced. This led Arago to complain of the difficulties which his reason experienced in understanding God. 'But,' said I, 'it is still more difficult not to understand him'; and he did not deny it. 'Only in this case,' said he, 'it is quite impossible for me to understand the God of the philosophers.' I replied, 'We are not dealing with him, although I believe that true philosophy conducts us with faith in God; but I wish to speak of the God of the Christian.' Whereupon he exclaimed, 'You mean the God of my mother! How

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much comfort she had in kneeling before him!' He said no more; but his heart had spoken." Thus a man left to his better instincts, true to his conscience and the light of the Oracles, comes back to God.

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"THE FATHER"

OF all the great truths of Scripture the Fatherhood of God is practically the only one with which nobody seems disposed to take issue. The Greeks accepted it, as appears in Paul's wonderful sermon to the philosophers on Mars' Hill when he quotes from Aratus: "As certain even of your poets have said, 'We are also his offspring.'" The Romans also accepted it, as appears in their worship of Jupiter, whose name, Zeus-pater, means the universal Father. In like manner the Norsemen bowed before Al-fadir, "the Father of all."

In current controversy the brotherhood of man is usually based upon the Fatherhood of God. It is not an uncommon thing to hear men who practically repudiate God, blaspheme his name, tread upon the blood of his covenant, desecrate his holy day and habitually violate his law, discourse in eloquent terms on their filial relation with him. It is important, therefore, that we should understand what this means, the Fatherhood of God.

I. At the outset the proposition rests upon the fact that God created us.

The record runs on this wise, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our like-

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ness." So the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a "living soul."

In being thus animated by the divine breath man is distinguished from the lower orders of life and well qualified to have dominion over all. At the moment of his creation he stood erect with his face toward the sky: endowed with a mind to contemplate great verities, a conscience to "distinguish betwixt the worse and better reason," and a sovereign will to do his own choosing even in defiance of God.

> "Oh, mighty brother soul of man!
> Where'er thou art, or low or high,
> Thy skyey arches with exultant span
> O'er-roof infinity!"

We are warranted thus in tracing our lineage back to God; and in doing so we must needs renounce what Carlyle calls "the religion of frog spawn." Our family tree is outlined on this wise, "the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." This tree of genealogy has obviously no point of contact with that other tree in which our remote ancestry is traced through the lower to the primitive forms of life. As for me, I am glad to have my family pride saved in this way.

But, after all, there is only a sort of qualified sonship in the fact that man is God's masterpiece. When a sculptor says of a beautiful statue, "This is the child of my brain," he is using a figure of speech;

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but if a youth enter the studio saying, "My father," you recognize a vital difference between the statue and the artist's son. One is the offspring of his inventive mind, while the other is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and has a corresponding claim upon him.

It is a great thing, nevertheless, to be the masterpiece of the Creator. By so much is a man better than a sheep! And by so much is human responsibility above that of the lower orders of life.

II. The second ground upon which our divine filiation might be assumed is that of generation. But this is out of the question. God never begat but one Son. When you hear the co-equal divinity of our Lord and Saviour called in question — as occurs not infrequently in these days — I beg you to remember that he consistently claimed to be the *only-begotten* Son of God. So it is written, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And thus it is formulated in the Nicene Creed, "He was begotten before all worlds." There he stands, solitary and alone in all the universe! God the Father bare witness to this singular sonship of Jesus when both at his baptism and his transfiguration he said from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Our Lord spoke frequently of his Father, and to the disciples of their Father; but he never confused his filiation with theirs. A hundred times or thereabouts he said "my Father"; much less fre-

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quently "your Father"; on one occasion "my Father and your Father"; but he never included himself in the words "our Father." When his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, he answered, "When ye pray say, Our Father"; but he himself did not pray that way. How could he, in view of his singular relation with the Father as the only-begotten, on which he based his stupendous claim of equality with God?

III. But there is a third ground on which we may venture to call God our Father, namely, the Spirit of adoption: as it is written, "When the fullness of the time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God." And again, "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

We are thus advised of our alienation from God through sin, and of our vital need of restoration to holiness, because "without holiness no man shall see God." It is elsewhere said that we were "sold under sin," and therefore in need of redemption, which literally means a "buying back," if we would

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ever be restored to God. We are said to be "lost" by reason of sin; not irretrievably lost like a ship sunk in unfathomable sea, but like a ship driven upon a reef, which is still salvable by speedy and effective intervention. Furthermore we are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins"—dead because all the functions of our spiritual life are arrested—and therefore in need of a quickening, or "'gain-birth," which can only be effected by the Spirit of life.

The next thing disclosed in the Scripture quoted is the fact that God sent his Son into the world to redeem us. So comes the intervention of divine grace. The only-begotten Son of God bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He paid the ransom for all, "tasting of death for every man." Whether we are saved or not, he died to make us salvable. It is for us to say, each for himself, whether or no that divine interposition shall spell salvation for us.

The darkest day in David's life was when he learned of the death of Absalom. He staggered up the winding stairway to his chamber on the housetop wringing his hands and crying, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee!" He would, indeed, have gladly given his life to reclaim that wayward son. That, however, was impossible. But what David could not do, our Father has done. And what more could he do to redeem us?

The resultant fact is the possibility of adoption

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into the family of God. Our Father's house is open to all. But whether we enter or not depends on us. It is written of Christ, "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become the children of God." This is the sole condition affixed to adoption, that we shall receive Christ as our Saviour: as it is written, "Neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved"; and as he himself said, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me."

Faith in Christ is the touchstone of life. There are no true sons and daughters of God among those who reject God's well-beloved Son. This is the crucial test, "If God were your Father, ye would love me."

Not long ago this advertisement appeared in the personal column of one of our newspapers: "The public are warned against the representations of my son Ira, whose unnatural conduct has driven him from home and deprived him of the confidence of those who still love him. The door is open, and he may return at any moment when he is ready to deport himself as a loyal son. If this should fall under his eyes let him know that, under these conditions, a welcome awaits him. Meanwhile all are warned against trusting him." What a tragedy may be read between those lines!

The world is full of such desolated homes, such

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injured love, such secret sorrow and futile tears.

A missionary was called to a wretched dive in the Tenderloin to visit a young woman who lay desperately ill. She told him her story; how she had run away from the restraints of home and plunged into the dissipations of a reckless life. "Oh, if I could only get back!" she cried; "I'm so tired of it all. Spring is coming on the old farm, and I'm homesick. But they never, never would take me back." The missionary wrote to her father and a letter came back like this: "Tell her our hearts are hungry for her: tell her no matter what has happened we will give her a loving welcome. The door is always open for her." On the outside of that letter was the word "Immediate." Alas, it came too late!

It's the old story over again of the boy who asked for his patrimony and crossed the hills into the far country where he wasted all in riotous living: until, at length, forlorn and forsaken, he hired himself out as a swineherd; — it always comes to that! — and, sitting upon the trough in the swinefield, he came to himself, saying, "In my father's house there is plenty and to spare, and lo, I perish with hunger! Fool that I have been! I will arise and go!" No sooner said than done. When next we see him, the father's house is bright with music and laughter, and the returned prodigal, clothed in the best robe and wearing the signet ring, is sitting at a feast of fat things and wine upon the lees.

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So runs the gospel of our Father's love. When once we say, "I will arise and go," he comes out to meet us while we are yet a great way off. And "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

But the story does not end here. In one of John's Epistles he says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God!" It is related that a native helper at Malabar, who was employed in the translation of the Scriptures, on coming upon this passage in John's Epistle, said to the missionary, "I cannot write that. It cannot be true! Let me rather translate it, 'Behold what manner of love is this, that we should be permitted to kiss his feet!'" But this is only the beginning of wonders. The next verse reads, "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is!"

Thus we are left to dream dreams and see visions of things that cannot be uttered. A great surprise awaits the adopted sons and daughters of God at the lifting of the veil. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." Shade your eyes, beloved; for these are things beyond us. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man

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the things which God hath prepared for them that love him!"

But the way to the realization of all such visions of glory ineffable is Christ. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of adoption. The mind that was in Christ Jesus is loyalty to the Father's will. The countersign at the doorway of the Father's house is "In his name." He is the first-born among many brethren. And the one condition of reconciliation with God is faith in Christ; as he said: "I am the way; no one cometh unto the Father but by me."

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"ALMIGHTY"

AT the close of a religious conference at Manchester, England, in which current questions in theology were discussed with great license, Dr. Dale said to his friend Dr. Berry, "I wonder if there is anybody left who fears God?" The latter replied, "It would, indeed, appear that we are accustomed to take great liberties with God."

If so, a plea for reverence will not be amiss. The barriers that were set about Sinai were there for a good purpose. It was little wonder that the people "trembled and stood afar off." So terrible was the sight that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." On being called up into the mountain he obeyed, but was charged to return immediately and "let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Jehovah." Why so? Why must they keep their distance from Sinai, when every other mountain could be approached at will?

Who is this God that we should be required to draw near with such reverent awe? He is the Almighty; the Infinite One. Our breath is in our nostrils. He is like the sun; while we are, in comparison, as motes flying in a sunbeam. It was this con-

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sideration that led David to cry, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

The angels and archangels are represented as veiling their faces before him while they sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"

In one of Isaiah's visions he saw the Lord, "sitting upon a throne high and lifted up"; whereupon he cried, "Woe is me! I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King!"

In the desert of Midian where Moses was keeping his flocks he saw a flame bursting from an acacia-bush, and said, "I will turn aside now and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." But a Voice called to him, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Yes, but is it not written, "Ye are not come unto a mount that burned with fire, and unto blackness and darkness and tempest and the sound of a trumpet; . . . but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, . . . to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn . . . and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant." All true; but read on: "Once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heavens. . . .

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Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire!"

We are come to Calvary, where God reveals himself in the person of his only-begotten Son. But this mountain also is enveloped in darkness. The sun goes out at noon! For three mortal hours the Saviour groans and agonizes under the burden of the world's sin. At length he cries, "It is finished!" and the veil of the Temple is rent asunder, signifying that henceforth the way is open for sinners to approach God. Thus we, "who were afar off, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ."

It still remains, however, that God is to be approached with holy awe. The distance between the finite and the Infinite is not affected by the Cross. God is still God and man is still man.

"Be bold; be bold; be not too bold!" Christ did not come into the world to destroy the salutary barriers, but to open up a way of reconciliation, so that men in a filial spirit might penitently, believingly and lovingly return to God.

It is recorded that when John the Evangelist saw the Saviour in a vision, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks clothed in his divine glory, he "fell at his feet as one dead." This was the same disciple who had lain with his head on the bosom of Jesus in the upper room; but between him and the divine Son in his transcendent glory there was

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a distance so great that even grace could not bridge it!

"My God, how wonderful thou art;
  Thy majesty how bright!
How beautiful thy mercy-seat
  In depths of burning light!
Oh, how I fear thee, living God,
  With deepest, tenderest fears;
And worship thee with tender hope
  And penitential tears!
Yet I may love thee too, O Lord,
  Almighty as thou art;
For thou hast stooped to ask of me
  The love of my poor heart.
Father of Jesus, love's reward,
  What rapture will it be,
Prostrate before thy throne, to lie
  And gaze and gaze on thee!"

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"MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH"

IT is appropriate that the Scriptures should at the very outset give an account of the origin of things: wherefore it is written, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

In some quarters this is called "The Poem of Creation," or "The Creation Legend," or "The Genesis Fable." It is not the scientists, however, but the neophytes of science, who speak on this wise. Your true scientists — such as Newton and Faraday and Dana and Agassiz and Henry and Gray and Dawson and Kelvin — have been accustomed to refer to the cosmogony of Genesis in reverent terms. Their acquisitions of wisdom have not been so illimitable as to prevent their sitting at the feet of God.

It is frequently affirmed that "the Bible is not a scientific book." Granted; but it is a true book; and whatever it affirms in the domain of science must therefore be scientifically correct.

The majesty of the Genesis story is instantly apparent when contrasted with corresponding records; for of making many cosmogonies there is no end. If there is any appreciable value in mere human wisdom the Greeks should have been able to speak

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advisedly in these premises. The starting-point in their cosmogony, as elucidated by Thales, was water; which in process of time was so wrought upon by an all-prevailing energy as to produce in some inscrutable manner the present order of things. But this offers no solution of the mystery. We are still left to inquire, Whence the water and whence the all-pervading force?

The starting-point of the cosmogony of the Egyptians was a promiscuous pulp, from which the elements separated of their own accord; whereupon the mass took fire and the upper portion warmed the lower into life. From beneath crept forth reptiles, and from the rising smoke the fowls of the air: while the ooze of the river-bed, like the evolutionists' *bathybius,* furnished the raw material for man.

The Hindus began with darkness, in which was a golden egg. The egg was broken and Brahma issued forth. He, turning, made of one portion of the shell the heavens and of the other the earth. His body then fell asunder, and from its parts proceeded the various castes of men.

The Babylonians set out in much the same way. In the darkness was born a giantess, who contributed half of her body to make the heavens and the other half to make the earth; while her blood, mixing with the dust, produced the human race.

The starting-point of the Norse mythology was a vast chasm wherein a conflict was going on between fire and ice. Out of that conflict was born

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Ymyr, the giant. His flesh produced the earth, his bones the mountains, his hair the forests, his blood the seas and rivers, his skull the dome of heaven; and from his eyebrows was made a wall around the earth to prevent its inhabitants from falling off.

Such are the cosmogonies of the false religions. How instantly do all thoughtful men, not to say scientists, take issue with such puerilities. Yet these are the results of the best efforts of human wisdom to produce a rational theory of origins! They leave unanswered the great question: Whence came I, and whence came the present order of things?

We turn from all such speculations to science; and it is science that speaks in the Genesis record. Here are three stupendous facts, set forth in the words: *B'reshith Elohim Bara;* that is, "In the beginning God created." And these facts are distinctly scientific facts. For science means "to know"; and in the three words referred to we have substantially all that is known, all that has been thus far discovered and all that is likely ever to be found out respecting the origin of things.

In the first of these words we are advised that there was a beginning.

Let it be observed that there is no beginning in any other cosmogony. There is always something beyond: and that something is inscrutable. To undertake to solve the problem as Plato did, by hy-

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pothecating the eternity of matter, is simply a begging of the question by the introduction of a guess. Science makes no guesses. If, in tracing things back to their beginning, it comes up against an insuperable obstacle it stops there, saying, "I know not." But the Genesis record does not stop there. It carries us back beyond man, organic life, cosmos, chaos, matter and nebula into the primal silence and solitude. Nor does it leave us there, in a blank domain of vacuity or nothingness. It brings us to the doorway of the King's audience-chamber, saying, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God!"

So the second of the great words of Genesis brings us face to face with God, "source of all being, throned afar." And God, like "the beginning," is distinctly a scientific fact.

The choice lies between three alternatives.

The first of these is Law. But law yields no answer to the problem; for law itself is an effect and demands a cause. There must be a lawgiver behind it. In one of the classic poems we have an account of a philosopher who, being shipwrecked on the island of Rhodes, as he walked along the beach found a geometrical figure traced in the sand. "Here," said he, "are *vestigia hominum,*" the traces of man. He did not need to be told that some one had been there before him, since

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the geometrical figure forced the conclusion that somebody had made it.

The second alternative is Chance. Can the present order of things be accounted for as "a fortuitous concourse of atoms"? Let us see. There are twenty-four letters in the sentence, "In the beginning God created;" suppose we shake them together and cast them out. Now calculate, by the law of permutations and combinations, how many such castings it would take to produce the words "In the beginning God created." The chances are infinitely against it. What likelihood is there, then, that the infinitude of atoms which constitutes our earth, cast forth to the mercy of fortuitous circumstance, would produce a world of vales and forests and mountains, of birds and beasts and men? The suggestion is obviously preposterous.

The third and last alternative, the only one which is left by the rule of residues, is God. If this does not solve the problem, and solve it scientifically, I know not where a thoughtful man can look for any solution of it.

In Westminster Abbey there is a monument to Sir Isaac Newton, on which he is represented as weighing the world in a steelyard, with a look of deep perplexity on his face, as if he were asking, "Whence came it?" In the Poets' Corner of the same Abbey there is a monument to Joseph Addison, who proposed the answer in these words:

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"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

"The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

"Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;

"While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings, as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?

"In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
'The Hand that made us is divine!'"

The last of the three initial scientific words of Scripture is *Bara,* that is, "created." The word is defined as the making of something out of nothing.

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Do you say "impossible"? Do you quote the venerable maxim, "Out of nothing, nothing comes"? But how do we know that? All that we mean is that we never saw it. In the nature of the case there can be no analogy for Creation. No man ever made anything; all we can do is to transform one thing into something else. We live on a ball of matter eight thousand miles in diameter; and no scientist has ever yet been able to produce a single grain of sand. Air and earth and water are teeming with life, yet no scientist has ever been able to originate a bioplasmic cell or to reanimate a dead fly. It is not strange, therefore, that the creative act is called in question. But let us not undertake to measure God by finite analogies. We cannot take his stature with a yardstick or his girth with a tape measure. Creation is his prerogative. All things are possible with God, and "nothing is too hard for him."

We are like schoolboys in the playground at recess, talking in great swelling words about the "infinite" and "unconditioned" and "indeterminable," when suddenly the Master appears upon the scene. What a scampering then! So when we, in our boasted wisdom, have spoken our latest word God enters to say, "Ye do err, not knowing my power!"

But, assuming the truth contained in the three scientific words of Scripture, there are questions which still remain to be answered.

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One of these is, "When did the creation occur?" How long ago?

In the margin of the first chapter of Genesis we find the date, 4004 B. C. But this is no part of the inspired text. All that we can gather from the record itself is that the creation occurred "in the beginning," a beginning which was indefinitely long ago. And is not that precisely what science affirms about it?

The next question is, "How long were the successive periods of creation?"

It is written: "In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." But objectors say: "All investigations go to show that these periods were of indeterminable length." True! The chalk cliffs, for example, are a product of animal life, being composed of the shells of marine animalculæ. It is calculated that it would require a century to produce a layer of a single foot; yet there are cliffs on the coast of England a thousand feet deep! How then could the world have been framed in six solar days?

But who said that the world was "created in six solar days"? Certainly the Scriptures do not say so. Such an assertion is in direct contravention of their statement. The word translated "day" is *yom;* which is used elsewhere to indicate all sorts of definite and indefinite periods. The proof of that statement is at hand. In Genesis 2:4, the word *yom* is made to cover the entire creative week. In

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Leviticus 25:29 it refers to the year of jubilee. In Jeremiah 46:21, it includes one of the long campaigns of Pharaoh-Necho. In Ezekiel 30:3 and elsewhere it designates the millennium or thousand years of the earthly reign of Christ. In Psalm 2:7, it covers all eternity or the lifetime of God. It must be obvious, therefore, that when it is affirmed that the Scriptures limit the creation to six solar days, the statement is wholly without ground. The Scriptural record at this point is absolutely scientific. God works through the immeasurable æons. He makes no haste. The eternal years are his.

The next question has to do with the Order of the creative epochs.

And here again we notice a marvelous coincidence. The fossils and footprints in the layers of the primeval rocks are precisely in the Scriptural order. It would not be fair to affirm that no scientists hold a different view; but is quite within bounds to say that the consensus is in favor of the following order: (1) chaos, with cosmic light; (2) the dividing of the firmaments; (3) the appearing of vegetable life in the palæozoic or carboniferous age; (4) the emergence of the heavenly bodies; (5) the appearing of the lower orders of life in the mesozoic age; (6) the higher orders or mammalia in the kinozoic age, with man as masterpiece and sovereign of all.

A further question, and a most important one, is,

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"Where did the author of the Genesis record get his information?"

To say that the story is a patchwork of contemporary legends and traditions is only to push the difficulty further back. How could any man speak advisedly in these premises? If God created the world, he was alone when he did it. There was no man there to see. Here is his challenge: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who stretched the line upon it? Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Is it not evident, therefore, that any true cosmogony must be by direct revelation from God? The word "revelation" means an unveiling. If any man is qualified to write the story of creation it must be because it is divinely unveiled before him.

Is it not reasonable to suppose that the method would be that by which the prophets usually received their communications from God? The man divinely chosen to record the story of creation was wrapped in an ecstatic trance, in which he saw a moving panorama of events, broken by intervals of darkness, which would naturally be characterized as night. Let us put ourselves, as Hugh Miller did, in the seer's place and observe what passed before him.

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First, a vision of chaos; a molten ball enveloped in igneous vapors. There is a conflict between the inward fires and cooling winds from the illimitable fields of space. The surface of the earth is congealed again and again, only to be ruptured by the inward heat and thrown into vast ridges of granite, "like the ice-floes of a polar sea." The rising vapors are condensed in torrents of falling rain, which are thrown back again like water from a white-hot disk. It is a hopeless battle. The fires are worsted. The earth gradually cools. A film forms over the molten sea and the primeval forms of continents appear. The rains find a lodgment, and rivers race to the lower levels to form the primal seas. All is darkness and turmoil; reverberating artillery of the heavens, with fierce flashes of electric fire; black night and confusion worse confounded. Then light appears; not in an instant, indeed, for this is cosmic or frictional light. A glimmer here and there reveals the unspeakable disorder of the frightful gloom. The scene now shifts. The curtain falls; there is an interval of darkness. The evening and the morning were the first day.

In the second scene the clouds are lifted. The upper and lower firmament are parted asunder; the outlines of the seas and continents are visible; the great canopy is lifted overhead, and between it and the earth beneath are sweeping tempests of corrosive gases. Of this period alone it is not written, "And the Lord said, 'It is very good.'" As yet the at-

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mosphere can sustain no form of organic life. The world has thus far been only preparing for it. The curtain falls. The evening and the morning were the second day.

The third vision is of a vast steaming greenhouse. Out of the sluggish waters springs a luxuriant vegetation. This is the age of bulbous plants, of gigantic *sigillaria* and *lycopodia,* of ferns springing aloft like towering pines, growing rapidly and as rapidly decaying and falling upon one another, until the steaming earth seems like a vast tamarack swamp. This is the carboniferous age. The forces which are to be used in the industries of the future are now being generated and stored away. The eyes of the dreamer close. The evening and the morning were the third day.

In the fourth vision are seen glimmering points of light in the upper firmament. Thus far there has only been cosmic light. The sun and moon and stars now appear in clear outline. Here is the beginning of divisions of time; summer and winter, seedtime and harvest. The world is getting ready for history. Again the scene shifts. The evening and morning were the fourth day.

The fifth vision brings in the lower orders of animal life. The egg-bearers appear — reptiles and fishes and birds. A visit to the Museum of Natural History will throw light on this period. Here are lizards a hundred feet long crawling in the slime. Here are creatures with eye-sockets a foot

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in diameter. Here are birds that leave mighty footprints on the soft formative rocks. The curtain falls again. The evening and the morning were the fifth day.

The sixth vision shows the mammals or higher forms of life. The earth is teeming with them — beasts of the field and forest. And on this canvas, last of all, supreme and pre-eminent, appears man, having dominion over all living things, erect and sovereign, with his face uplifted toward heaven, "able to think God's thoughts after him." So ends the Panorama of Creation. The evening and the morning were the sixth day.

And then God entered into his rest; as it is written, "In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

How imposing is this record as compared with other cosmogonies. What simplicity! What fine reasonableness! What a scientific tone of absolute certainty! If this be not scientific, how shall we account for the fact that Moses or somebody else was able thus to anticipate the approved results of modern science? And this so many thousands of years ago!

But what is the practical bearing of such a discourse as this? Much every way. If the story of creation is true it furnishes an antecedent probability that the Bible is true. On the other hand, if the

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veracity of the author of Genesis is successfully impugned, what reason have we for assuming the truth or trustworthiness of other Scriptural authors who assume to advise us in spiritual things?

The first chapter of Genesis and the first chapter of John go hand in hand. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

I see two thrones: one is the circle of the universe whereon He sits, high and lifted up, with veiled face, calling into existence things that are out of those that were not. The other is on Calvary; where again his face is unveiled. And, behold, the God of creation is the God of salvation. "The God that rolls the world along speaks all the promises." The problem of origins is the problem of destiny.

> "'Twas great to call a world from naught,
> 'Tis greater to redeem."

I hear two fiats: one is, "Let there be light!" and cosmos emerges from chaos in the glory of day. The other is recorded in the saying, "The light shineth in the darkness," and further on the words, "It is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

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It is related of Dr. Simeon of Cambridge, that when he was dying he said, "I am not afraid; I find my comfort in the saying that is written, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'; for he who created is able to redeem. The God who framed the world can uphold and save me!"

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Section II

" And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."

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Fairest Lord Jesus,
Ruler of nature!
O thou of God and of Mary the Son! —
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honor;
Thee, my delight, my glory and my crown!

Fair are the meadows,
Fairer the woodlands,
Robed in the flowery garb of spring:
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
Who makes my sorrowful heart to sing.

Fair is the moonshine,
Fairer the sunlight,
Than all the starry and celestial host:
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer,
Than all the angels heaven can boast.

— *Crusaders' Hymn.*

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"AND IN JESUS"

A CHRISTENING is a great event in any family circle. Fond parents ponder long and with much perplexity over a suitable name for the little one. The old names are shop-worn, and the new are meaningless; where in the world shall one be found to measure their devotion to the wonderful newcomer, "feeling his way out from the shore of the great unknown into the light of day"? There are suggestions from relatives and friends; while the innocent, wide-eyed, wondering stranger who is destined to carry his name for better or worse through all the journey of life is the only one who has nothing to say about it.

But however important such an occasion may be with us, it was still more so among the Jews, because they endeavored to put their prayers and hopes and aspirations into their children's names.*

The parents of the wonderful Child of Bethlehem

* To the Jews the names of their children were omens and prophecies of character and destiny. For example, Isaac, meaning "Laughter" (see Gen. 17:15–19, also 18:9–15); Ichabod, meaning "Departed Glory" (see I Sam. 4:10–22); Naomi, meaning "Pleasant" (see Ruth 1:19–21); and Job's three daughters, "The Door," "Cassia" and "Plenteousness" (Job 42:13, 14). The Jews hoped, moreover, to transmit their religion to succeeding generations in this manner; hence the fre-

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were not perplexed as to the choosing of a suitable name, since God had already provided it. He had sent his angel Gabriel, in the annunciation to Joseph and to the virgin mother, directing that he "should be called Jesus"; and Joseph and Mary were glad to acquiesce in the divine will.

But what's in a name? In the tragedy of "Julius Cæsar" one of the conspirators asks of Brutus,

"Why should his name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together: yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy."

That is, however, far from being true. Call the name of Cæsar; and straightway you hear the footfall of an army. Call the name of Plato; and a procession of scholars is seen walking under the plane-trees by the Ilyssus. Call the name of Milton; and you hear the rippling of Siloam's brook that flows fast by the oracles of God.

But of all the names that were ever named in heaven or on earth there is none like that of Jesus. Sound it forth, and lo, there are voices of a heavenly multitude singing, "Worthy art thou . . . to receive the glory and the honor and the power!" And from tens of thousands of earthly sanctuaries comes the echoing song:

quent occurrence in Hebrew names of "El" and "Je," the initial syllables of Elohim, the most common title of God, and of Jehovah, the "incommunicable name," which was never uttered except in this way.

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"All hail the power of Jesus' name;
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown him Lord of all!"

This was *our Lord's "baptismal name."* He was taken to the sanctuary by his parents to be circumcised on the eighth day and was there entered as a member of the Jewish Church and placed in covenant relations with God.

The name is the Greek form of Joshua, which is an abbreviation of Jehoshua, meaning, "God my Saviour." Its rationale is given in the words, "For it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Joshua of old did for the children of Israel what Moses could not do. The latter led them out of Egypt to the borders of the land flowing with milk and honey and left them there; but Joshua brought them into it. So it is written, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us"; that is, grace succeeded where the law had failed in making possible a deliverance from the penalty and power of sin.

This is also *his most familiar name.* His kinsfolk and townsmen knew him that way. The scribes and Pharisees said, "Is not this Jesus, the carpenter, whose father and mother we know?" The

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blind man in the ninth of John said, "The man that is called Jesus anointed mine eyes." The beggar on the way to Jericho addressed him as "Jesus, thou son of David." The name inscribed upon the *titulum* of the cross was, "*Jesu Nazaret Rex Judæorum,*" that is, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Israel of God." He wrote better than he knew; for the time is coming when all the kings of the earth shall lay their crowns at Jesus' feet; when every knee shall bow before him and every tongue confess that he was and is what he claimed to be.

This was also, in a sense, *his official name.* It was the custom of the Romans to give what was called an "agnomen" to those who distinguished themselves for prowess on the high places of the field. When Scipio returned from his eastern campaign he was by a solemn decree of the Senate called "Africanus," in recognition of his services in that distant land. In the name Jesus there is a like reference to the mighty work which he was destined to accomplish in the behalf of man.

Furthermore, this is *his perpetual name.* Two years after the crucifixion, when Saul of Tarsus was riding down to Damascus, breathing out slaughter against the followers of Christ, he saw a light above the brightness of the sun and heard a voice from heaven saying, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." It thus appears that the Saviour kept his name after he had returned to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

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Fifty years after the conversion of Paul, the aged John in his exile on Patmos saw a vision of a majestic figure walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, clothed in a garment down to his feet and bound with a golden girdle, with a face shining as the sun shineth in its strength. So dazzling was the glory of Jesus in his heavenly estate that his beloved disciple fell at his feet "as one dead." But he was reassured when Jesus laid his right hand upon him, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last and the Living One: and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." In other words, this was the same Jesus whom John had known in the time of his sojourning among men. It is a blessed thought that we shall know him not only by the scars of his passion but by this familiar name.

But more important than all else to us is the fact that Jesus is *the name by which his people know him best* here and now. One of the clearest memories of my boyhood in the far West is of a Sunday-school song:

"There is no name so sweet on earth,
No name so sweet in heaven,
The name before his wondrous birth
To Christ the Saviour given.
We love to sing around our King
And hail him blessèd Jesus;
For there's no word ear ever heard
So dear, so sweet as Jesus!"

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It is perhaps because of that memory that I love, almost above any other of our familiar hymns, the one that Doddridge wrote to be sung after his sermon on Romans 8:35:

> "Jesus, I love thy charming name;
> 'Tis music to mine ear;
> Fain would I sound it out so loud
> That earth and heaven might hear."

The question of supreme importance is, *What is the personal significance of this name to us?* That question cuts the world in sunder. It divides all people into two classes: those to whom Jesus is nothing and those to whom he is everything. Nor is there any middle ground to stand on.

To the indifferent, as to the unbelieving, he is but a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and they see no beauty in him that they should desire him. They cannot help basking in the light of his countenance — for Christian civilization is like a vine that groweth over the wall, whose clusters are plucked by every passer-by — but how many there are who care nothing for the giver and lack the common courtesy to say, "I thank you."

On the other hand, there are multitudes to whom Jesus is everything. They have accepted him as Priest and Prophet and King; and there is no reservation in the surrender of themselves to him.

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They can echo the words that Bengel wrote in a love-letter to his wife:

> "Jesus in heaven;
> Jesus in the heart;
> The heart in heaven;
> Heaven in the heart."

All depends, then, on personal appropriation. In some of the Oriental churches it is the custom of those who have thus accepted the Saviour to call him by a new name, not *Jesu* but *Jesui,* the final vowel standing for the first personal pronoun possessive, meaning "my Jesus." This is the faith that makes the great salvation ours. Jesus on his Cross saves no man; it is Jesus coming into the heart, as through an open door, and taking possession and control of our lives, so that we can say, "My Lord, my Life, my Sacrifice, my Saviour and my all!"

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"CHRIST"

THE people of Nazareth were assembled on a certain Sabbath to hear one of their townsmen discourse on the lesson of the day. This expositor was Jesus the carpenter, whose shop was near by. There were farmers in the congregation whose plows he had made, and women, behind the lattice of the synagogue, whose crippled furniture had been mended by him. They had known him as a man of spotless character and helpful on occasion in the services of the sanctuary. A few weeks before he had closed his shop and set out on a preaching tour. Meanwhile his friends and neighbors had been hearing rumors of his eloquent sermons and wonderful works. He had gone away unknown and had now come back famous. It was not strange that everybody turned out to hear him.

The service began with the Shema, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt have no other gods before him." The master of the synagogue then offered prayer, which was followed by the responsive chanting of a Psalm. After that came the reading of the Law and a portion of the Pentateuch, and then the lesson of the day. At this point the interest reached its height. In ac-

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cordance with custom the ruler of the synagogue called for any competent and suitable person who was so disposed to read and expound the lesson. And Jesus "stood up to read." The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was taken from the sacred chest and delivered to him, "and the eyes of all were fastened upon him."

Then he proceeded to read the lesson. It was in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. There are preachers who would have paused just there to argue the current question as to whether this portion of the book was really written by Isaiah or by a hypothetical author known as "Deutero-Isaiah." If Jesus was what he claimed to be, he knew the merits of that question *pro* and *contra,* and could easily have settled it. But he had more important business on hand than threshing out empty straw. He had a vital message to deliver in the exposition of the passage before him, and was as eager to deliver that message as the people were to hear it.

"*And he began to say, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.*" Of the sermon which followed we have no report; but enough is given, in the proposition here laid down, to indicate the full tenor of it.

His message is clear. He came "to preach good tidings to the poor, . . . to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

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By this we are given to understand that *he claimed to be the Christ.* Could he verify that claim? This is what the average man wants to know above everything else. Was this Jesus the Messiah "whom Kings and prophets longed to see and died without the sight"?

> "We walk at high noon; and the bells
> Call to a thousand oracles;
> And the sound deafens, and the light
> Is stronger than our dazzled sight.
> Still struggles in the ages' breast,
> With deepening agony of quest,
> The old inquiry, 'Art thou he,
> Or look we for the Christ to be?'"

There was no lack of interest in the synagogue that day. The congregation was agreed as to the preacher's power; "all bare him witness, and wondered at his words of grace." But there were some who doubted, saying, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Was it possible that this townsman of theirs, whom they had seen standing in the shop with chips and shavings about his feet, was the long-looked-for Messiah, the only-begotten Son of God? There were others so filled with indignation at his preposterous claims that "they rose up and thrust him out." But some believed; among them his mother, who, looking through the lattice behind which the women were accustomed to sit, was keeping the great secret in her heart; and with her doubtless

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were others of those "ministering women" who were to be found following Jesus in after days.

Of the Messianic titles used in old-time prophecy there are three which have surpassing importance. These are "the Son of Man," "the Son of God," and "Christ." Our Lord assumed these titles, with the honors and prerogatives attending upon them, in such manner that no thoughtful man can deny his claim to Messiahship without impugning his character as an honest man.

First, *he claimed to be the Son of Man;* not a son of man, but distinctively "the Son of Man"; that is, the One who was to appear in human form to deliver the world from sin. Not less than forty-six times in the Gospels is this title used with reference to him. Once, when certain Greeks came to Jerusalem, saying, "We would see Jesus," he kept them waiting without while he uttered these significant words: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. . . . And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." The people answered him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" Then Jesus said, "Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not." *

* Of the frequent references in prophecy to this Son of Man it will suffice to mention that in the vision of Daniel: "Behold the four winds of heaven brake forth upon the great sea;

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Second, *he claimed to be the Son of God:* not a Son of God, but distinctively "the Son of God."

The angels are sometimes called sons of God, as in the passage, "The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." And frequently good men are so called, as where it is written, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

But here the title refers to Messiah as the sole and singular Son of God: in other words, his "only-begotten Son."

Our sonship is by creation in the divine likeness, and again by adoption whereby we are enabled to say, "Abba, Father"; but his Sonship is by an eternal generation. God has many sons, but only one "begotten Son." And this is the honor which our Lord assumed, so making himself co-equal with God.

Third, *Christ,* i. e., the Anointed One. In this title are included both Son of Man and Son of God. In the person of Christ the two natures are knit together in mystical union. In all the universe there

and four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." The first was like a lion; the second like a bear; the third like a leopard; the fourth a nondescript beast, with iron teeth. These were the similitudes of the four great powers of the ancient world which rose, flourished and disappeared. "Then was another throne set up and One like unto the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven" and took his place upon it, of whom it is written, "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:1–14.)

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is not another like him. He stands solitary and alone as the God-man.

As to the claim of Jesus in these premises, there is no room for question. On one occasion the Jews said, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." And Jesus answered, "I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." He says he had "already told" them, as if it were his common, frequent claim. And again, at the close of his ministry, the High Priest before whom he stood on trial for his life said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." That he intended this to be the strongest possible affirmation is evident from what follows: "Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? . . . What think ye?" They answered and said, "He is worthy of death."

It was this claim to Messiahship that brought about the crucifixion of Jesus. There were other charges in the indictment against him, but he died for "making himself equal with God."

It thus appears that the Messianic claim of Jesus is beyond all question or peradventure. The only

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rational ground on which it can be rejected is that he was an impostor.

The question clamors for an answer: "Who is this Jesus who is called — and calleth himself — the Christ?" If his claim is valid the conclusion is unavoidable: it behooves us thus to receive him.

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"HIS ONLY SON"

IT is related that Jesus on one of his journeys came to Sychar, where Jacob's well was; and "being wearied with his journey he sat thus [that is, like any weary man] by the well."

This man on the well-curb is well worth looking at, because — though obviously a man — he claims to be the only-begotten Son of God. He claims to have been in the glory of the Father "before the world was." He claims to have come into the world on a definite errand; namely, to deliver men from the power of sin. He claims that when his errand is accomplished he will return again to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. These are stupendous claims. It behooves us to know whether they are true or not; for in them are involved the issues of life.

I. Observe, *he is a man.* This is easy to see. He is "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh"; that is, "able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," because he is one of us.

He is a poor man. Not a prince in purple, nor a beggar in rags, but one of the Third Estate of toiling men. He has no home of his own. "The foxes have holes," he says, "and the birds of the heaven

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have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." He has no well-filled purse. If he was what he claimed to be, then all the wealth in the bosom of the everlasting hills belonged to him; but he had stooped to share the struggles of the poor, that he might be able to sympathize with all prisoners of poverty, and that they, by his poverty, might become rich toward God.

He is a man of sorrows. You may read that in his face. The chastening touch is there. He is bearing some burden that weighs heavily upon him. What is it? "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." If we follow this wayfaring man we shall presently see him coming to Calvary, bearing his cross. This is the burden of the world's sin; and he will bear that burden until his great heart shall break under it.

He is a benevolent man. That also is written in his face. This journey to Sychar is a labor of love. "He must needs pass through Samaria," a roundabout way, to meet a sinful woman who needed him. This was his habit.

He is a sinless man. And here we part company with him. For "there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It is recorded of Adam that he was made without sin but also without positive character. For that he must be exposed to trial. He was tempted accordingly, and fell. This man at the well is "the second Adam," who was also born in innocence and

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subject to trial. He too was tempted, and won out!

In this he stands solitary and alone among all the children of men. He never committed a wrong act; he never spoke a wrong word; he never entertained a wrong thought. He "hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." His challenge was, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" The answer was made by Pilate, who sentenced him to death: "Behold the man! . . . I find no crime in him!" And this is the testimony of all the succeeding ages. Not even the bitterest of the foes of Jesus has found a joint in the harness of his perfect righteousness. He stands alone, the one incomparable man. He stands for man as God planned him: man without sin, worthy of his birthright as the child of a holy God.

II. And therefore *he is an unaccountable man.* This perfection of his is like the x in an algebraic problem which must be reduced to known terms. How shall that be done? It is impossible unless we are prepared to consent that he was more than a man.

The problem was attempted by Theodore Parker, the great leader of radical Unitarianism, who was forced to this conclusion: "The mightiest heart that ever beat, stirred by the spirit of God, wrought in his bosom. What deep divinity of soul! He unites in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, more than realizing the dream of prophets

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and sages. He gives free range to the spirit of God. He sets aside the Law, sacred and time-honored as it was; its forms, its sacrifice, its Temple and its priest. He puts away the Doctors of the Law, subtle, learned, irrefragable; and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God!"

The infidel David Strauss faced the same problem and reached this conclusion: "If in Jesus the union of self-consciousness with the consciousness of God has been real, and expressed not only in words but in all the conditions of life, then he represents within the religious sphere the highest point, beyond which posterity cannot go: yea, which it cannot even equal: inasmuch as every one who hereafter should climb to the same height could only do so with the help of Jesus who first attained it."

III. But if this is true it is to affirm that Jesus *was the Divine Man: that is, "the only-begotten Son of God," and therefore equal with God.*

It had been prophesied that when the Messiah came it would be as God's only-begotten Son. "I will tell of the decree; Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee."

At the baptism of Jesus, and again on the Mount of Transfiguration, a voice was heard from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The disciples thus recognized him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God"; and Peter particu-

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larly in his good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The importance of a definite understanding in this matter is emphasized in the words, "He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God." It is clear, therefore, that there can be no middle ground. We are bound to conclude that Jesus, in setting up his claim as God's equal, was an impostor and a charlatan, or else he was what he claimed to be.

To my mind the only solution of the problem is that which was arrived at by Napoleon when he said: "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus was not a mere man! Superficial minds see a resemblance between him and the founders of empires; but there is none. Everything in him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me; his will confounds me. His birth and life, the profundity of his doctrine, his march across the centuries, are for me a mystery insoluble. Here is a grandeur that overpowers me. In his death sin is expiated and justice satisfied. What a mysterious symbol, this Cross of the God-man! You speak of Cæsar and Alexander, of their conquests, and the enthusiasm which they enkindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests with an army devoted to his memory? Can you conceive of Cæsar governing an empire from the depths of his mausoleum? Such is the perpetual miracle of progress;

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the power of the Christian's God! He has founded his empire on love, so that at this hour millions would die for him. What a proof of his divinity! He speaks, and generations are bound to him by the closest of ties. Here am I at Saint Helena, chained to this rock; and who thinks of me? Behold the destiny of Napoleon the Great! What an abyss between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ! By this I perceive that Jesus is God!"

The point I am trying to make is this: that *the deity of Jesus is conclusively proven by his perfect humanity.* I know there are other ways. You may demonstrate his deity by showing his perfect correspondence with the prophecies of Scripture, or by showing how he marches through history in the vanguard of civilization toward the Golden Age: but to my mind a stronger argument is based upon his character as the Unaccountable Man. It seems impossible that any one should look fixedly at him without perceiving that he was more than man: and if so, then by the force of irresistible logic we are driven to the conclusion that he was divine, as he claimed to be.

The divine seal was put upon this singular Sonship of Jesus by his resurrection from the dead. He had said, "I am the life." He had also said, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again"; in other words, life was his in such wise that he could do what he pleased with it. When Pilate said, "Knowest thou not that I have

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power to crucify thee?" his answer was, "Thou wouldest have no power against me except it were given thee from above." If his life were taken from him it was because he chose to surrender it: and in that case he had "power to take it again." What a stupendous claim! No mortal man could make it. If he could prove that assertion he would vindicate his Godhood. Could he prove it?

The record runs that when the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate asking that the sepulcher of Jesus might be made sure "lest haply his disciples come and steal him away," he answered, "Go, make it as sure as ye can." They went accordingly and made the sepulcher "sure." They rolled a massive stone before it, whereon was affixed the great seal of the Empire, and stationed guards round about to defend it. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh! As well might Pilate undertake to imprison the beams of the ascending sun!

As the night wore on the sentinels were pacing to and fro when suddenly the ground began to tremble. A crash! The rocks were reeling and tottering! A vivid light from heaven! The seal was broken; the stone was rolled away; the guards were lying prostrate as dead men! Then from the shining heights of heaven a troop came gliding down and the Prince of Life arose from his tomb, wiping the death-dew from his brow; while angels thronged his chariot and bore him aloft to the glory awaiting him. Listen! Voices from the distance: "Lift

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up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory will come in!"

So Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead." He rose not at the behest of a voice from without but by his own volition. This was the crucial test. Had it failed he would have shown himself, like Samson shorn of his locks, "weak as other men." But the grave could not confine him. The conclusion is irresistible: This power of an underived and indestructible life verified his claim as very God of very God.

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"OUR LORD"

TO say that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord is to profess a complete surrender and subserviency to him.

First, as our Priest. In that capacity he mediates between us and the holy God who has been justly offended by our sins. As our Mediator he expiates our sins by bearing their penalty in his own body on the tree; thus making it possible for God on his part to be "just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus," and for man on his part to be "just before God." It is thus as our Mediator that "he ever liveth to make intercession" for us. Such is the divine plan of salvation, which is called "the gospel of reconciliation," because it sets the sinner right before the law. It is also called "the atonement" because it brings us into a relation of at-one-ment with God.

Second, as our Prophet or authoritative teacher. In that capacity he instructs us in things pertaining to the spiritual life. A true disciple of Christ will never put any other authority before his or give to personal opinion a value above his word. If Christ says God is our Father, that ends it. If he says the Scriptures are true, that ends it. If he

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says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," that ends it. He sits in the Court of Final Appeal for all who love him. The moment a professing Christian prefers "I think" to his Lord's "Verily, verily, I say unto you," he parts company with him.

Third, as our King. The double function of a Sovereign is to command and to protect his subjects. Our Lord does both. His word of command is final to those who follow him. When he points to the place of secret prayer, saying, "Enter and shut to the door"; or to the communion table, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me"; or to the harvest field, saying, "Go, work to-day," a sincere Christian asks no questions, interposes no objections, takes advantage of no subterfuges, but proceeds to do what his Lord requires of him. It is this spirit of implicit, unhesitating, unswerving and joyous obedience that makes the yoke easy and the burden light.

There is no Overlord like ours; none so wise, none so loving, none so sympathetic with infirmity or so strong to overcome it, none so worthy of grateful and uncalculating loyalty on the part of those who serve him.

He said, "Ye call me Teacher, and Lord, and ye say well." If so, what follows?

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
Over mountain and plain and sea;
I'll do what you want me to do, dear Lord;
I'll be what you want me to be."

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Section III

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

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There comes a galley laden,
  A heavenly freight on board;
It bears God's Son, the Saviour,
  The great undying Word.

And proudly floats that galley
  From troubled coast to coast:
Its sail is love and mercy,
  Its mast, the Holy Ghost.

Now earth hath caught the anchor,
  The ship hath touched the strand;
God's Word in fleshly garment —
  The Son — steps out on land.

— *John Tauler.*

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"WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY."

THE fact that avowed unbelievers not infrequently draw the impassable line at the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus should occasion no surprise, since it is written, "Great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh; . . . angels desire to look into it." But that any professing Christian should entertain a doubt in these premises is vastly surprising; and still more so that any evangelical minister should withhold his yea and amen. This is difficult to reconcile with even the lowest view of common honesty: inasmuch as such ministers are in covenant bonds with respect to this doctrine, not only to receive but to "maintain and defend it."

In a recent clerical meeting in New York a clergyman said, "I do not hesitate to disavow the dogma of the virgin birth"; and a professor in one of our theological seminaries has said still more emphatically, "To accept the Scriptural account of the supernatural birth of Jesus at this stage of the world's progress is absurd." No one questions the right of anybody to hold such opinions in the proper

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place; but whether that proper place is in a fellowship pledged to maintain and defend the doctrine referred to is another matter. It need scarcely be said that, if left to a jury of business men, the decision would be that such men are not honest men.

It is related of Peter that he thrice denied his Lord and repented with bitter tears; but those denials were due to a panic of cowardice and they did not affect the absolute sincerity of his confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; nor in thus denying his Lord did he deliberately violate any vow of loyalty or hold his Master up to blasphemous derision as the ill-begotten son of Joseph and therefore somewhat less than an average man.

It should be added, however, that such instances are few and far between. The vast majority of ministers are as honest as the light and as true as steel. Our Lord said that in his church the wheat and the tares must grow together until the great day; and he forewarned his people to beware of false teachers whose errors, while they would assuredly lead many astray, could not mislead his true followers, since his sheep "know his voice" and do follow him.

But now, to address ourselves to the truth in question, *Why should not Christ be born in this way?*

I. *It is within the bounds of possibility,* because "with God all things are possible." Of course if the supernatural be denied this miracle goes with it.

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If law is superior to the Law-giver then all births are alike, and God is here, as everywhere else, bowed out of doors. But such crass materialism as this has obviously no place among Christians and finds its best answer in the words, "Ye do err, not knowing the power of God."

II. *The supernatural birth of the Messiah was prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures.* The first sinner received a promise that the "Seed of woman" should come in the fullness of time to "bruise the serpent's head." How the son of a woman could have sufficient power to deliver a world of sinners from the bondage of sin was explained in such subsequent prophecies as "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," and still more explicitly, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call his name Immanuel," which being interpreted is, "God with us."

III. *The fulfillment of all such prophecies in Christ was affirmed by Christ himself.* He knew the Old Testament by heart and was familiar with its Messianic predictions. On the way down to Emmaus with two of his disciples it is written that, "beginning with Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." In other words, beginning with the protevangel respecting "the Seed of woman" he followed the red trail down to the

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words of Malachi, "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings."

The Old Testament was his Bible, his only Bible, and he was not only familiar with it but absolutely loyal to it. He, who probably understood Scripture as well as any Biblical expert of modern times, never uttered a word or syllable to indicate that he supposed it to contain a single error or that he did not believe it from beginning to end; and those who sincerely profess to believe in Christ, and who have unreservedly accepted him as their Prophet, or authoritative teacher, will agree that the Book which was good enough for him ought to be good enough for us.

If so, then we stand pledged to his view of all those Messianic prophecies which are fulfilled in his supernatural birth.

It is affirmed, however, by those who deny that Christ's birth was out of the ordinary, that "he does not say so." This is not true. It would scarcely be expected that he would have much to say about the manner of his birth, but on occasion he frankly and explicitly referred to it. Take for example his interview with the religious leaders of the Jews in the eighth chapter of John:

And he said unto them, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: . . . except ye believe that I am he ye shall die in your sins."

They said therefore, "Who art thou?"

He answered, "Even that which I have also

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spoken unto you from the beginning. . . . When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he. . . . If ye abide in my word, then . . . ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

They said unto him, "We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man."

Jesus said, "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father; and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. . . . If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me!"

Thereupon they taunted him with the rumor of his ill-begotten birth; to which he calmly replied, "I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself but he sent me. . . . If a man keep my word he shall never see death."*

They asked him, "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died?"

He answered, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

They said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

He answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born I am."

This reference to his birth is surely as clear as could be expected; and, being joined not only with the distinct affirmation of his pre-existence and the most solemn title of Jehovah (the I AM of the

* "They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one father, even God."

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burning bush) it leaves no room for doubt as to his assumption of equality with God.

IV. *The miraculous birth of Jesus is vouched for by the inspired writers of the New Testament.*

This fact, so far as I am aware, is not denied in any quarter; but their trustworthiness and authority as writers claiming the infallibility of divine inspiration is called in question by all so-called "liberals." This throws us back not only upon our Lord's clear view of inspiration, but upon his statement that the teaching of his apostles was to be accorded an authority equal to his own. "He that heareth you heareth me," he said, and *vice versa.* He thus put his imprimatur upon their teachings in such a manner that no one can be warranted in saying, "I believe what Jesus says, but reserve the right to reject Peter and Paul." As followers of Christ we are bound to accept the inspired record as of equal reliability from beginning to end.

V. *The singular birth of Jesus, as prophesied and thus affirmed by himself, is a necessary factor in the divine plan of salvation.*

In Anselm's "Cur Deus Homo" he argues: The Saviour must needs be man, that he may be able to suffer and thus atone for sin; and he must needs be God, that he may suffer sufficiently to atone for the world's sin; wherefore he must needs be *Theanthropos* or God-man — that is, Very Man of Very Man and also Very God of Very God, and both in the same person — else he cannot save us.

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VI. *The Scriptural account of the Nativity has been accepted by the Universal Church from the beginning until now.*

In fact the Church is founded upon this truth. When Peter witnessed his good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," our Lord said, "Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." * No church, therefore, which rejects the proposition thus affirmed can truly claim to be a Christian Church; and that proposition can only be construed as designating the sole and singular sonship of Jesus as the one only-begotten Son of God.

And just here is the rational basis of Church union. So long as human nature is what it is we can neither wish nor hope for uniformity among all denominations; but there is no reason why all who truly believe in Christ as the Son of the living God should not clasp hands and agree to differ as to many non-essentials which now divide them.

The trouble is, however, that ultimate authority for the divinity of Christ is found only in the Scriptures, and that authority is reduced to the vanishing point when the Scriptures are regarded as anything less than the inspired and therefore inerrant Word of God.

* The words *Petros,* a stone, and *petra,* a rock, are not identical. The rock was Peter's confession of the divinity of Christ. *Petros,* a stone hewn out of the rock, was the new name which he received because he had so courageously affirmed it.

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So it would appear that the incarnate Word and the written Word stand together, not only as a complete binomial revelation of all the spiritual truths which are necessary to our salvation but as a consensus of faith among all believers. And this is precisely what should be expected in view of the unswerving loyalty of Christ to the Scriptures and their equal and corresponding loyalty to him.

It only remains to say that the conclusion of the argument, so far as it is related to our personal salvation, must be found in our individual experience of the omnipotent grace of Christ as the veritable and only-begotten Son. The effort of the disciples to convince Thomas of the resurrection of his Lord was of no avail until Thomas for himself saw Jesus marked with the stigmata of his passion and his triumph over death. So, when wit and reason fail, the seeking sinner meets a seeking Saviour face to face and, closing in with his overtures of mercy, cries, "My Lord and my God!"

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SECTION IV

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell."

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I'll carve our passion on the bark;
  And every wounded tree
Shall drop and bear some mystic mark
  That Jesus died for me.
The swains shall wonder when they read,
  Inscribed on all the grove,
That heaven itself came down and bled
  To win a mortal's love.

— *Isaac Watts.*

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"SUFFERED"

THE passion of Christ was necessary to the carrying out of his great purpose of redemption. As God he could not "suffer," because, to use the phrasing of the early theologians, "God hath neither body, parts nor passions." In order to suffer, in the human sense of suffering, he must become man. And this he did; as it is written, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death." (Hebrew 2:14.)

In order to fit himself for the accomplishment of his great purpose he, in the fullness of time, emptied himself of the form of God and was found in fashion as a man.

His humanity was real. No halo encircled his head. He wore no royal purple. He had given up all outward form and semblance of Deity and become to all appearance a mere man; insomuch that there was "no form nor comeliness" nor any "beauty that we should desire him."

In the terminology of the schools this is called the "kenosis," or self-emptying of Christ. It is

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important that we should understand just what it was that he gave up when he thus "took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men."

The classical text in this connection is Philippians 2:1–11: *"If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Let it be observed, then, that he did not empty

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himself of his Godhood, but only of its form or fashion. In the nature of the case he could not cease to be God; but he could divest himself of "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was," and this, in the incarnation, he proceeded to do.

He emptied himself of the outward form and exercise of his divine attributes. In his earthly ministry he held these prerogatives in abeyance; but they were always at his command, standing about him like genii awaiting his nod and beck.

Where was his Omnipresence now? He whom the heaven of heavens could not contain had consented to be enclosed within the narrow bounds of a fleshly tabernacle; yet on occasion he could, by the exercise of his will, be here and there and everywhere. When his disciples were in the upper room, with the doors closed for fear of their enemies, he suddenly stood in their midst. No bolts nor bars could restrain him.

And where was his Omniscience now? In speaking of the Judgment he said: "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." In other words, he had put away the exercise of this attribute; yet on occasion he could recall it, so that the past and the future were before him as an open book.

And where was his Omnipotence now? He who had created the world and all things therein, so that

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"without him was not anything made that was made," was subject to the common infirmities of human life. He was hungry and thirsty like other men. He lay asleep on the pilot's cushion of a little boat, weary with the labors of the day; but when the storm arose and the sailors bent over him crying, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" he summoned his almightiness and, lifting his hands above the surging waves, bade them "be still"; and like naughty children, they sobbed themselves to sleep.

He emptied himself, not only of the form of Godhood, in this manner, but also of the form of Lordship as well; for, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient." He who was the Lord of the universe — so lordly that when he spake, not only an innumerable host of angels and archangels, but the very stars in their courses, answered, "Here are we!"— consented to pass under a yoke of servitude that he might accomplish the great purpose before him.

He bowed at the behest of Cæsar, of Cæsar who was personally no more important in his sight than a mote flying in a sunbeam! Nay, more, he became the servant of every man; affirming that he had come "not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." He was the servant of every sinner, of every drab and drunkard on earth, having come to minister unto all.

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Still further, he "became obedient unto death." The Lord of life, in whom we live and move and have our being, bowed his head to the King of Terrors and consented to pass through the little wicket-gate that awaits every one of us.

In this, however, he did not cease to be the Prince of Life. If he consented to die, it was not because he had no power to live. "I have power," he said, "to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

He was no struggling victim like Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, who was dragged to the altar for the deliverance of her people. He had volunteered to die, saying, "Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will."

Still further, he emptied himself of the form of his Innocency. He became obedient "even to the death of the cross," consenting to take the place of a malefactor that he might die vicariously for all malefactors on the accursed tree.

He lifted the burden of the world's sin and bore it to Calvary, until his great heart broke under it. He went out into the outer darkness of expiation. He went down into the lowest depths of retribution. He could not surrender his holiness, but he could and did actually surrender the consciousness of it. He laid aside the fashion of his innocency as a garment, that he might be clothed upon with our shame. In this he became obedient not merely to physical

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but to spiritual suffering in our behalf. He was minded to die the death which, under the law, is imposed upon every mortal man: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Not otherwise can we understand the awful cry that marked the consummation of his anguish, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!*" The infinite Son of God, panoplied with all divine excellences, "holy, harmless and undefiled," free from the slightest taint or suggestion of personal sin, so changed places with us that he became in his own consciousness the great sufferer for sin.

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"UNDER PONTIUS PILATE"

A STRANGE immortality this for a man so proud of his honor as Pilate was! The world might have forgotten that he ever lived, despite the fact that he was Procurator of Judæa, were it not that he stands pilloried forever in the shadow of a prisoner at the bar.

The first time Pilate ever saw Jesus, so far as we know, was on an April morning when the mob, with Jesus in its hands, came surging across the bridge that spanned the Tyropœon Valley and presented itself before the gates of the Prætorium clamoring for an audience. If Pilate was out of humor, by reason of this unseemly interruption of his morning sleep, he probably did not show it. He met his petitioners with a smile, as became a politician, taking in the situation at a glance. He had heard of Jesus frequently, no doubt, but he scarcely expected to see him in this guise; a prisoner, worn and haggard from a night of suffering, with a hempen rope about his neck and his hands bound behind him.

And Pilate said, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

The answer was imperatively curt and insolent:

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"If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee."

In fact the charge against him was twofold: on the one hand he was accused of treason in claiming to be a King; and on the other of blasphemy in claiming to be equal to God. The latter charge, being of a religious nature, lay outside the purview of the Governor; but of the other, as one of Cæsar's magistrates, he was bound to take cognizance. He, therefore, led the prisoner aside and questioned him.

"Art thou the King of the Jews?"

The answer of Jesus was an emphatic affirmative, "Thou sayest"; but he added, "My Kingdom is not of this world. . . . To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

At the close of this interview Pilate brought his prisoner forth and pronounced a definite sentence of acquittal, "I find no crime in him." The mob was thereby kindled into new fury and demanded the more urgently the death of the prisoner. Pilate was at his wits' end. What could he do?

The fact that Jesus was a Galilæan suggested an escape from his dilemma. It so happened that at this time Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, was visiting in Jerusalem; and as the prisoner properly belonged to his jurisdiction, the perplexing case was turned over to him.

But Pilate reckoned without his host. Herod, who was familiarly known as "the fox," was too

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clever to be caught napping in that way. He was glad indeed to see Jesus, "because he had heard concerning him," but he declined to have anything to do with the case officially. He turned him over accordingly to his soldiers, who having set him at naught and mocked him, gave him back to the mob; who brought him again to Pilate, arrayed in cast-off purple. What now should the time-server do with him?

A happy thought! It was the custom to release a prisoner at the Passover. He gave the people the choice of two: "Whom will ye that I release unto you; Barabbas, the murderer, or this Jesus?" They cried "Barabbas" with one accord. "What then," he asked, "shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" "Crucify him! Crucify him! Away with him!" Alas, was ever man in such a quandary? What should he do?

He will compromise. The prisoner, being innocent, should in common justice be released offhand; but, says Pilate, "I will chastise him and let him go." The proposition is an illogical makeshift, and the people see through it. "Thou art not Cæsar's friend," they say, "if thou let him go!"

The travesty of justice ends with a suitable epilogue. Pilate, seeing that he prevails nothing, but that the tumult rather increases, takes water and washes his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. See ye to it."

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And they led the prisoner forth to the place which is called Golgotha to crucify him.

The story of Pilate is ancient history. Let us bring it up to date. The unavoidable question is this: "What shall I do with this Jesus, which is called the Christ?"

No man can ignore the question. It thrusts itself upon him. Go where he will, into the home circle, marketplace, library, Chamber of Commerce, or Legislative Hall, the name of Jesus is heard above every other name; and the eyes of Jesus, like those in the portrait by Fra Angelico, follow us wherever we go, silently demanding, "What will you do with me?"

We may reject him; we may, like Pilate, try to temporize with the question, or we may end the controversy by accepting him. And this I believe to be the only answer that any thoughtful man can honestly give to the question: What shall I do with this Jesus which is called the Christ? One of Lincoln's wise sayings was: "Nothing is settled until it is settled right." The man who, like Pilate, seeks to evade the responsibility of the situation by taking refuge in excuses and subterfuges, will find himself perplexed and harassed unceasingly until he finally disposes of the problem by either rejecting Christ or frankly and unreservedly accepting him.

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"WAS CRUCIFIED"

IT is not possible to misunderstand the teaching of Christ with reference to the manner of his death. His position was: The Scripture must needs be fulfilled: thus it is written; and thus it must be.

The phrase "lifted up" was in common use among the Jews and was generally understood as a reference to the ignominious death of the cross.

In one of our Lord's most notable sermons, addressed to the Pharisees with respect to the coming of the Messiah (John 8:13–32) he said: "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he."

It was clearly affirmed by Christ on many occasions; as when he was going through Cæsarea-Philippi — on that last journey, of which it is reported that, with the cold shadow of the Cross over him, he "set his face steadfastly to go" — when he said to his disciples that he should be delivered to the chief priests and condemned and scourged and crucified. (Matthew 20:17–28.) In other words, it was predetermined not only that he should die but that he should die in this particular way.

In another of his sermons, addressed to the people

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(John 12:23–26), he said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself," and it is added, "This he said signifying by what manner of death he should die."

It is further explained in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." *

It was thrown into the boldest relief by Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1–21), when he said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." This incident was used to illustrate the doctrine of salvation; and the analogy is perfect, as we shall now see.

In this doctrine there are three essential facts.

The first is Sin. Here is the starting-point. We shall make no progress toward a solution of the problem until we get a right idea of sin.

Sin, like the venom of the serpent, is all-pervasive. It courses through the blood from heart to finger-tips. It corrupts the mind, perverts the conscience, and enfeebles the will; so that "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and fresh stripes." (Isaiah 1:5.)

* Compare with Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23.

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Sin, like the venom of the serpent, is deadly. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." And to the mind of a right-thinking man there can be no death more frightful than eternal exile from God. The world has been groping through the centuries for some remedy for sin. The question is, How shall a man be just with God? In all the mythologies and philosophies of the world aside from the Gospel there is no hint or suggestion of any method of justifying a sinner in the sight of a holy God.

The second of the essential facts in the doctrine of salvation is Expiation. This is set forth in the lifting up of the serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so* must the Son of Man be lifted up." The resemblance is clear.

To begin with, the brazen effigy on the pole was really no serpent at all. It was wholly innocuous. There was no venom in it. So it is written of Christ that he was "holy, harmless and undefiled" among the sinful children of men. There was no fault in him at all.

But the brazen effigy was *like* a serpent. So it is written, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us." (Romans 8:3.) And still more emphatically, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf: that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

As the brazen serpent was impaled, "*even so* must

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the Son of Man be lifted up." He was lifted up by the wayside, where every passer-by might see.

This brings us to the third of the essential facts in the doctrine of salvation, which is Justification by Faith.—"Look, and live!" "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36.)

There was obviously no healing virtue in the glance. So far as that was concerned it would have answered the needs of the people just as well to look at the face of Moses or at the noonday sun. So faith in itself is a valueless thing. There is no essential grace in it.

Yet faith is set forth as the indispensable condition of life. The only reason why the sufferers in the Jewish camp were healed by looking at the brazen serpent was because God had declared that so it should be. In like manner faith in Christ and obedience to him is made the condition of the forgiveness of sin.

No one will question the fact that the God who wrought the miracle of healing in the wilderness had an indisputable right to make his own terms concerning it. It is equally clear that the God who bestows the gift of salvation has the right to affix a condition to it. This he has been pleased to do. His grace is free, free as air or water; but the air must be breathed, and a man will perish of thirst if he does not dip up the water and drink it. In like

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manner the great salvation is offered to all on the sole and simple condition that they by faith receive it.

No doubt there were many in Israel who, refusing to look at the brazen serpent, perished and were buried in the desert sand. Some put their dependence on such human help as was at their command; and they died. Some could not understand how there was healing power in a brazen serpent on a pole; and, refusing to look, they died. Others, feeling no pain, declined to believe that they were in serious danger, and, refusing to look, they also died. But there were multitudes who, hearing the invitation, obeyed and lived!

> "Look, look, look and live!
> There is life for a look at the crucified One;
> There is life at this moment for thee."

In one of Mr. Moody's after-meetings a man said to him, "I am in trouble about my soul; what shall I do?" Mr. Moody read him the story of the Crucifixion; but before he had finished the man cried, "I am a Jew! I do not believe in Jesus of Nazareth. He was not the Messiah; and I will not so receive him." Mr. Moody said, "Very well; let me read you something else." He turned to the story of Moses and the brazen serpent. The man said, "I believe that; but I don't see how it affects my case." Then Mr. Moody read the story of this interview of

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Christ with Nicodemus; and when he concluded, the inquirer said, with the light of salvation in his eyes, "I see it! This is the Christ of God! He *did* so love the world that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem it!"

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"DEAD"

CHRIST is dead! See him yonder upon the cross, face pale, limbs convulsed, pulse silenced. No need of a death certificate here.

"Is he quite dead?" asks the Centurion of his guard. "Aye, this is the spear which I thrust into his side a moment ago; when it was withdrawn, it gave token that his heart had ceased to beat."

Jews, priests and rabbis pass by, saying, "The Man of Nazareth is dead; we shall hear no further of his doctrines and wonderful works. He will trouble us no more."

The disciples as they reverently take his body from the cross perceive that the life-current has ceased to flow. "We hoped," they mournfully say, "that it was he who should deliver Israel; but, alas! he is dead."

Dead? Then why this commotion to-day? Why this controversy among all nations and the children of men? Is it possible that the world is so moved and troubled about a dead man, one who died and was buried nineteen centuries ago?

What does it mean? There are some hundreds of millions of people who gather at intervals about

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a table where a frugal feast is spread. They break the bread and say, "Lo, thus his flesh was bruised." They pour the wine and say, "Lo, thus his blood was shed." And then, lifting their hearts and voices, they speak with him as a living Christ, laying all their plans and purposes and hopes before him!

And what means this ever-increasing multitude of men and women who declare that he, with a mighty hand, has lifted them out of the miry clay and set their feet upon an everlasting rock?

He once said to a paralytic in Capernaum, "Son, thy sins are forgiven"; and he has been loosing paralytics from their infirmity and forgiving their sins from then until now.

He once said to a sinful woman who anointed his feet with oil of spikenard, "Thy sins be forgiven thee, . . . go in peace"; and through all the centuries he has been saving Magdalens and restoring them to self-respect and to divine peace.

He once said to a dying thief on Golgotha, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"; and there are multitudes of malefactors as guilty as poor Dysmas who are prepared to testify that just now he met them with the same message of pardoning grace.

And how is it that the name of Jesus is to-day the most potent name in war and diplomacy? His figure towers aloft in the affairs of nations like the Brocken of the Alps. What has become of other magnates who ruled the earth in centuries gone by?

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> "Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
> May stop a hole to keep the wind away."

But to-day Christ is the most influential arbiter in mundane affairs. It may be that Macaulay's vision will come true; that at some future time a New Zealander will stand upon a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. If so, however, it will be because that New Zealander will himself be the last consummate fruit of Christian culture; a man of higher attainments in moral power than those who reared the fabric of St. Paul's. For Christ is a living and omnipotent force, moving the world through each succeeding sun into a clearer light, and this will continue until, in the restitution of all things, every knee shall bow before him and every tongue confess, in the full glory of his millennial reign, that he alone is King over all.

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"AND BURIED"

I SAW, as in a dream, a great multitude of people who seemed to be traveling in caravans through an open country; and their faces were all turned one way. There were all sorts and conditions of people: Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, kings and yeomen, queens and courtesans, beggars and millionaires, idlers and handicraftsmen, captains returning from conquest with long processions of slaves dragged at their chariot wheels, philosophers and simple folk; but they journeyed together and their faces were turned one way. They traveled by many roads, broad and narrow, crooked and straight, by-paths and royal highways; but the roads all tended in one direction, converging at a great gate which towered aloft in the distance and cast its shadow over the whole land.

On this side of the gate was a river; and the river was dark and mysterious, because the gate cast a shadow over it. On this side of the river lay a deep valley: and the shadow of the gate fell over that also, insomuch that it was called "The Valley of the Shadow." And the gloom of that valley was so deep that none could see beforehand what of pain

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or comfort awaited him in passing through it.

I saw that the travelers were afraid of the valley and of the river and of the gate; wherefore many of them averted their eyes and refused to look that way.

And I heard a voice like the low roll of thunder, saying, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!"

It was the voice of the King of Terrors; and I knew then that the gate was the Gateway of the Tomb. For so it is written, "It is appointed unto all men once to die."

I saw a little child approach the gate; and it played and laughed up to the very threshold and then passed in. I saw an old man, so old that he was bent quite double with the burden of his years, who lifted his dim eyes and, seeing the gate, trembled but must needs pass in; and his record runs on this wise: "The days of the years of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty and nine years — and he died." I saw the proudest of earthly queens approach the gate and, realizing on a sudden that her end had come, she cried, "My kingdom for a moment of time!" but none answered her; and, without an instant's pause she, too, passed in.

Beside the gate on either hand were scattered heaps of refuse; odds and ends of everything that men count dear: goods and chattels, gold and silver, bonds and mortgages, crowns and laurel wreaths, bodkins and spindles, arms and armor, workmen's

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tools, clothing of every sort, purple and fine linen and homespun, masks and buskins; the things for which men live and labor with tears and blood; all now laid by! For so it is ordained; naked came we and naked must we go. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

A workman drew near to the gate and, as if realizing that his work was over, laid down his tools and passed in.

A rich man, so absorbed in gain that his very soul had turned yellow with the jaundice of gold, murmuring to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," suddenly lifted his eyes and, seeing the gate, turned ashen pale, disgorged his wealth and passed in. And the air seemed vibrant with these words, "Thou fool, whose now shall these things be?"

A king approached and, casting his crown and purple aside, lifted both his hands, palms upward and quite empty, and disappeared from view. This was he who boasted that he had conquered the world; and, behold, he left it all.

An old man drew near and, laying aside his garments, sang a hymn, which I remembered having heard him singing to himself at eventide:

"The day is past and gone,
The evening shades appear;

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Oh, may we all remember well
  The night of death draws near.
We lay our garments by
  Upon our beds to rest;
So Death will soon disrobe us all
  Of what we here possessed."

Thus one by one, alone and empty-handed, they passed in.

Then I heard another voice, louder than that of the King of Terrors and sweeter than the music of a harp, saying, "Be of good courage; *this is the Gateway of Life!*"

I turned to see. He was standing by an open sepulcher, and near the sepulcher was a Cross; and a strange light, which seemed to issue from the sepulcher, fell upon the Cross, and then upon the gate. And I knew that this was the sepulcher of Him by whom life and immortality were brought to light.

He knew whereof he spake, for he had himself passed through the gate. It was written of him, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death." In order that Christ might become the firstborn of many brethren, he was born of a woman. In his infancy he was wrapped in swaddling-bands. In manhood he wore homespun and toiled in a workshop. In his ministry he traversed the weary thoroughfares of Pales-

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tine, wearing the dusty garments of a wayfarer. In his death he was clad in cerecloths and carried to a tomb. All this he did as our Elder Brother and representative; that, living and dying, he might be one with us. He lay in the sepulcher as one who slept, and, rising, blessed the bed.

As he passed through the great gate he, turning, said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and *whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die!*"

Wherefore the sepulcher is the Gateway of Life for us.

> "No more a charnel-house, to fence
> The relics of lost innocence,
> A vault of ruin and decay:
> The imprisoning stone is rolled away:
> 'Tis now a place where angels use
> To come and go with heavenly news,
> And in the ears of mourners say,
> 'Come, see the place where Jesus lay'!"

The light that issued from the open sepulcher fell also upon the faces of many of the travelers, so that they feared no more. They, too, must needs bid their friends farewell, but not as if they were parting forever. It was only "until we meet again." As they passed through the valley they sang, "I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." As they forded the river

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they sang, "I will not fear, for thou hast redeemed me. Though I pass through the waters, they shall not overflow me; for thou art the God of my salvation." And as they entered the sepulcher the light fell so wondrously upon their faces that fear vanished, being supplanted by the radiance of an endless hope. Thus they passed in.

One of these closed his eyes, as Stephen did, when "falling on sleep," and when he opened them it was with a look of glad surprise, as if he suddenly realized the truth of that intimation, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Another, weary with the long struggle of life and conscious of having done his best, said, like Paul, as he entered the gate, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day."

And still another, looking through the gate, saw something which seemed to transfigure him; so that, reaching up his hands, he cried,

"The world recedes; it disappears;
Heaven opens on my eyes; mine ears
With sounds seraphic ring! Lend, lend your wings!
I mount, I fly! O grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

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I saw now that the light from the open sepulcher fell still beyond. On the left was a region of darkness, with shadows flitting through it; and on the right "a better country, that is, a heavenly." As far as one could see were fields "all dressed in living green." The people there were clothed in white, the livery of the King's servants. As they served they sang, "Worthy is he who hath redeemed us out of every nation and kindred and people and tribe and made us to be kings and priests unto God!"

In the far distance was a throne, and He that sat upon it was arrayed in garments white and glistering. His face shone with a light that, mingling with the light of the open sepulcher, fell over all the country; as it is written, "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof; . . . and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it."

I observed that when the travelers, with the light reflected on their faces, entered the gate and turned toward the right to enter the Better Country, they all gave the countersign, "In His Name." It was the name which is above every other that is named in heaven or on earth; the name of Jesus, the Prince of Life, who had said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." And when they gave that

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countersign he said, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Then straightway they began to sing with a loud voice, saying, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever!"

And in the distance beyond the gate I saw their welcome. Never were strangers returning from a long absence so joyously received. Friends gathered from near and far. Oh, blessed home-bringing! Wives who had been separated from their husbands greeted them with joy unspeakable. Mothers clasped in their arms the children who had slipped away from them years before. They all said "Good morning!" In that better country they never say "Good night," because there is no night and there are no partings there.

All their sorrows were over. They had passed through the Lord's Gateway of Life into endless day.

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"HE DESCENDED INTO HELL"

THE word "hell" has a repugnant sound, and rightly so. It should be uttered with bated breath. And the reason is because it designates the penalty of sin.

Sin is the most abhorrent thing in the universe. It ruins character, desolates homes, overthrows governments, and pollutes the very air we breathe. It corrupts the body, enfeebles the mind, and — unless its ravages can be arrested in some way — must ultimately separate the immortal soul from God.

Its penalty, as a matter of course, measures up to it. The law says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" As life is to know God, so death is to be exiled from him.

Can sin be removed? Never! Lady Macbeth was right, "What's done cannot be undone." A sinner once is a sinner forever, notwithstanding the grace of God.

Can guilt be removed? Never! The wound may heal, but the scar remains. God may forget, but we must remember. His lovingkindness is magnified by the fact that we shall gratefully look on the pit from which he has delivered us.

Can the penalty be remitted? It can! Thanks

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to the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Father who spared not his only-begotten and well-beloved Son but sent him to endure vicarious death for us!

He paid our penalty. In Gethsemane he drank the bitter cup that should have been pressed to our lips. On the Cross he descended into the hell that justly awaited us.

The two darkest, bitterest experiences in the history of a human soul are conviction and retribution; and both of these, in a very real sense, were endured by him who became our substitute before the offended law.

Was Christ a sinner then? No, and yes.

Of all who ever lived on earth he was the only guiltless one. There was no guile in his heart, no guile on his lips.

But he became our substitute before the bar of the offended law. In doing so he must needs change places with us. If he would suffer for our sins, he must feel them as his very own. Thus it is written, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

The pain of the publican who beat upon his breast, crying, "God be merciful!" the pain of the prodigal son as he sat in the swine-field, realizing in rags and poverty his unspeakable loss; the pain of Bunyan who, as he walked through the forest with a certain fearful looking for of judgment, envied, as he says, the very owls and toads; the pain of all

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who have ever felt themselves to have passed justly under the wrath of a holy and offended God — all this was in the cup which, in behalf of a ruined race, was pressed to Jesus' lips.

It must have been to his own consciousness as if he, the absolutely sinless one, had committed all the thefts and murders and adulteries and unspeakable blasphemies that had even been laid to his people's charge. Oh, what a world of anguish was laid upon the heart of this Atlas, who thus identified himself with us!

He not only entered into the consciousness of our sin, but assumed its full penalty; as it is written, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." In view of this fact there is an awful significance in the statement of the historic creed that he "descended into hell." The worm of remorse that gnaws and never dies, the fire of despair that burns and is never quenched, the outer darkness of divine abandonment — he knew them all. Little wonder that his frame shook and trembled or that the sweat of agony stood like blood-drops on his brow, when this cup was pressed to his lips.

"O Christ, what burdens bowed thy head!
  Our load was laid on thee.
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead;
  Didst bear all ill for me.
A victim led, thy blood was shed;
  Now there's no load for me!

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"Jehovah lifted up his rod;
O Christ, it fell on thee!
Thou wast sore stricken of thy God;
There's not one stroke for me.
Thy tears, thy blood, beneath it flowed;
Thy bruising healeth me.

"The tempest's awful voice was heard;
O Christ, it broke on thee!
Thy open bosom was my ward;
It braved the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me!" *

* In the Liturgy of the Reformed Church this doctrine is set forth in the Office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper in these words: "He assumed our flesh and blood: he bore for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished everlastingly, from the beginning of his incarnation to the end of his life upon earth. He fulfilled for us all obedience to the divine law and righteousness, especially when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of him the bloody sweat in the garden, where he was bound that we might be freed from our sins. He afterward suffered innumerable reproaches, that we might never be confounded. He, although innocent, was condemned to death, that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. Yea, he suffered his blessed body to be nailed on the cross, that he might affix thereon the handwriting of our sins. He also took upon himself the curse due to us, that he might fill us with his blessings. He humbled himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell, both in body and soul, on the tree of the cross, when he cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' that we might be accepted of God, and never be forsaken of him. And finally he confirmed, with his death and shedding of his blood, the new and eternal testament, that covenant of grace and reconciliation, when he said, 'It is finished!'"

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At the beginning of our Civil War in the little town of Yadkin there was a collision of the skirmish lines. The negroes, hiding in the swamps behind the fences, saw here and there puffs of smoke and knew that this was a part of the mighty conflict in which were involved their hopes of manhood and freedom. The next morning an old colored preacher, coming out of hiding, saw lying in the road a dead man, his hands clutching the earth, his blue coat stained with his life-blood. He went back and brought with him a little company of refugees, and they scraped out a shallow grave beside the road and buried this man who had suffered and died in their behalf. To-day a church stands over that mound, and the negroes assemble there to render praises to God.

But what shall be said of Him who by his death on Calvary has delivered us from eternal shame and sorrow? "What shall I render unto Jehovah for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Jehovah. I will pay my vows unto him!"

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Section V

"The third day he rose again from the dead."

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Let us rise in early morning,
And, instead of ointments, bring
Hymns of praises to our Master,
And his resurrection sing:
We shall see the Sun of Justice
Risen with healing on his wing.

—*John of Damascus.*

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"THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD"

WHO was Jesus? A man of the people, who had received his education for the most part in a carpenter shop; yet he put himself forward as an infallible teacher. He touched the great problems of eternity with a fearless hand and "taught as one having authority." The common people followed him in multitudes and heard him gladly. The scribes and Pharisees — the accredited theologians and religious leaders of the time — looked on with amazement and undisguised envy. They demanded of him, "Whence is thine authority?" He answered, "From heaven." And they said, "Then give us a sign from heaven to verify it."

He had wrought many miracles among them. I do not say he claimed to work miracles; because at that time his miracles were undisputed. There were present in the popular gatherings those whose eyes had been opened, whose leprous scales had been wiped off, whose palsied limbs had been restored by him. In the presence of such witnesses there was no room for doubt or peradventure.

The only question was, Whence did He derive this power? Was it from above or from beneath?

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The scribes and Pharisees intimated that it was from Satan. "No," said Jesus, "it is divine power. I can do nothing except the Father be with me. I and my Father are one." Then demanded the scribes and Pharisees, "Let us see your credentials. If this power be from heaven, show us a sign from heaven to attest it."

One sign, and one only, he consented to give, namely, "the sign of the prophet Jonah"; that is, three days in the darkness of the grave and then life and immortality brought to light.

It is the fashion in these days to make light of the story of Jonah. In some quarters — in some pulpits, even — it is referred to as "a fable." Evidently, however, Jesus did not so regard it. He made its truth the guarantee of his own triumph over death. Had he regarded it as mere folklore he could not have made such use of it.

We do not employ fables as guarantees of fact. Try it in a court of justice. "As surely as Jason sought and found the Golden Fleece, so surely will I tell the truth." That would scarcely answer. You must certify by an indubitable fact like this: "As surely as there is a God in heaven I will tell the truth."

Or try it in a common matter like the contract for a debt; make out a promissory note on this wise: "By the sign of Jack and the Beanstalk I promise to pay when this obligation falls due." Does that seem grotesque? It is not a whit more so than to

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allege that Jesus referred to a "fable" when called upon to produce a sign in verification of his claim as the only-begotten Son of God.

Time was when the earth trembled at the name of Charlemagne, who extended the Frankish rule over the greater part of Europe and assumed the crown of the Roman Empire. He died A. D. 814 and was laid to rest at Aix la Chapelle, in a mausoleum constructed after the model of the holy sepulcher at Jerusalem. By his own direction he was seated upon a throne, in grim derision of the King of Terrors, with the imperial crown upon his head and his purple mantle over his shoulders, a jeweled scepter in his hands, and across his knees the sword with which he had endeavored to conquer the world. Four centuries later his tomb was opened by the Emperor Otho; and there sat Charlemagne, a rattling skeleton! The crown and scepter had fallen; the purple robe was odorous of decay; but the rusted sword still lay across his knees. So passes the glory of this world! What then of the marvelous claims of Jesus if he remained a dead man?

His sepulcher was sealed with the great seal of the Roman Empire, which meant that the world was against him. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his Anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us!' He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh!"

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The clock strikes. The guards around the sepulcher are falling as dead men! The stone is rolled away, and Christ comes forth. The sign is verified! The imperial seal is broken: the world powers are set at naught: and the twofold assurance of authenticity and authority is placed forevermore upon his work as our Saviour.

Who is the mightiest of earth's mighties? The King of Terrors! Is there any to dispute his power? Can the power of wealth equal it? Crœsus returns to dust. The power of glory? Nay, "the paths of glory lead but to the grave." The power of armies and navies? The shores of all the oceans are littered with wrecked fleets and all its hillsides strewn with the dust of panoplied hosts. Who then shall dispute with Death? On his pale horse with scythe in hand he has the right of way. At the door of the cemetery he laughs, "I gather them in! I gather them in!" The last words of Cardinal Beaufort are: "Fie, fie! Why should death have me? Are my treasuries empty? Go, bribe him!" Fold the great Cardinal's hands, carry him out; Death has conquered. Death always conquers!

Always? Nay, not in Joseph's garden. Here Christ meets the King of Terrors and vanquishes him. In the darkness of this sepulcher the bands and napkin, stronger than adamant, are as green withes in the grip of this divine Samson who comes forth wiping the death-dew from his face and say-

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ing, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

And into the fellowship of this triumph he invites his people, walking with them as they follow the bier and standing beside them at the graves of their beloved, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

To-day the name of Christ is above every name that is named in heaven or on earth. The most potent figure in current events is not Czar, nor Sultan, nor King nor Kaiser, but the same that Isaiah saw seven hundred years before the Advent: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, . . . this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save! Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me!"

The campaign of the Kingdom is on. It began at the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus met his disciples for the last time, saying, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and evangelize." In pursuance of that commission the royal standards onward go. On those standards is the red symbol of the Cross, and over it the superscription, "I am . . . the Liv-

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ing One; and I was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of hell!" His work is not in vain. The hands of the King's dial move not backward. The consummation of the great enterprise will be the establishment of his kingdom, when every knee shall bow before him.

It is recorded that when Saladin, the bold leader of the Moslems in the Third Crusade, was on his death-bed he bade his attendants hang his shroud upon the outer walls of his palace and cry aloud, "This is all that remains of Saladin the Great, who hoped to conquer the world!" But the empty shroud in the sepulcher of Christ meant that death had no more dominion over him. Thus Peter and his companions interpreted it. No more did they say, "We go a-fishing." Thenceforth, in pursuance of their original call, they were fishers of men. With their faith thus fortified they stood ready to face all dangers in the service of their living Lord.

So do we find our strength and courage in the assurance that from his high place he leads and blesses those who follow him. "Go, labor on; spend and be spent!" For behold, your labor is not in vain in the Lord. He lives; and "because he liveth we shall live also." Wherefore let those who have entered into the fellowship of this glorious hope seek those things which are above where Christ — the ever living and reigning Christ — sitteth at the right hand of God.

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Section VI

"He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

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To-day our Lord went up on high,
  And so our songs we raise:
To him with strong desire we cry
  To keep us in his grace;
For we poor sinners here beneath
Are dwelling still 'mid woe and death.
  All hope in him we place:
    Hallelujah!

Thank God that now the way is made!
  The cherub-guarded door,
Through Him on whom our help was laid,
  Stands open evermore;
Who knoweth this is glad at heart,
And swift prepares him to depart
  Where Christ is gone before:
    Hallelujah!

—*Johannes Zwick.*

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"HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN"

Scene: The Mount of Olives.

Time: Forty days after the resurrection of Christ.

Dramatis Personæ: Christ and a company of his friends assembled by his appointment.

ALL are on the *qui vive*. While waiting for his appearance they recall the three eventful years of their association with him. They speak also of the future. Is it their Lord's will at this time to proclaim his earthly sovereignty? Possibly this is the meaning of his appointment with them to-day. Will he lead the way to Jerusalem, claim his scepter and usher in the Golden Age?

Down below flows the Kidron; how often they have crossed it on their way to the trysting-place at Gethsemane! In the distance are the homes and temples of Jerusalem. Whichever way they look is holy ground. The footprints of their Lord are on every path and hillside. Memories come crowding thick and fast upon the minds of these watchers of Olivet, when suddenly he stands among them.

"Peace be unto you!"

It is his familiar salutation. How eagerly they

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gaze upon the face that so lately was marked with the death anguish. The greetings over, they unburden their minds: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replies, "It is not for you to know times or seasons." Then he renews the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, and repeats the injunction to go into all the world and preach his gospel. They gather around him in love and wonder and reverence; he lifts his pierced hands in blessing, and slowly rises from their midst. "Earth has lost her power to keep; the waiting heavens claim him."

As he ascends through the yielding air his eyes are bent on his disciples; his arms are outstretched, and his voice, heard for the last time, dies away in benediction. They utter no despairing cry like that of the prophet who saw Elijah ascend in a chariot of fire, but silently, with strained eyes, they follow him upward into the deep blue till the clouds, like a white pavilion, enfold him. There are flashes of gold like speeding cohorts of angels, vibrations of light like the waving of celestial banners, then a crimson glory at the rolling back of Heaven's gates.

How simple yet sublime this parting from his earthly friends! But who shall tell what took place behind those receiving clouds? In what new form of majesty, with what swift flight through the rare cloudless ether, by what heavenly hosts attended and with what rhapsodies of song, was this King of

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Glory escorted through the everlasting gates and welcomed to his holy hill?

Did these disciples kneeling on Olivet with upturned faces hear from the far distance an echo of the ancient war cry of prophecy, "God is gone up with a shout, Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet"? Or did there come from afar a mingled sound as of many waters when their Lord passed through the prostrate ranks of the great multitude, while angels that excel in strength and elders with harps and vials full of odors bowed low and sang, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing"? Did ten thousand times ten thousand, with a voice like a rolling ocean, cry "Amen and Amen!" as he thus resumed the glory which he had with the Father before the world was? Were these the visions that passed before the bewildered eyes of his disciples that day?

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"AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY"

IT is recorded that when Jesus had finished the work which he had come into the world to do he returned to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was."

Mark says he "was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God."

Paul says, "The Father . . . made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." And elsewhere the same apostle enjoins us as followers of Christ to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God."

Peter says that Jesus "is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers

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in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they." In another place the same writer says, "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In these and other passages of like import we are given to understand that Christ, having accomplished his great purpose in the redemption of the race, has entered into his rest. By his vicarious death he laid the foundation of a Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness which is ultimately to be established in this world of ours.

In the forty days which intervened between his resurrection and ascension he met his disciples repeatedly and marked out for them the plan of the campaign; gave them their great commission, "Go

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ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation," and equipped them for their work by conferring the influence of the Holy Spirit. Having thus set in motion the forces which were destined to bring in the Golden Age, he was quite ready to enter into his rest.

And now he sits in heaven "expecting." (Heb. 10:13.)

Meanwhile the work of the Kingdom goes on under the supervision of the Holy Spirit, who is the Executive of the Church, leading its members "into all truth," putting them in remembrance of the teachings of Christ and directing them in the campaign. The Kingdom is Christ's, as "the fruit of the travail of his soul"; but the work of establishing the Kingdom on earth is under the immediate control and supervision of the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time the Lord will appear to claim his own. He will come to assume the throne when, under the influence of the Spirit, the Gospel shall have been preached to the uttermost parts of the earth. Then the tabernacle of God shall be among men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God — the God of salvation — will be their God.

As the years pass and the campaign is progressively carried on, the expectant Christ "ever liveth to make intercession" for us. It goes without saying that he has lost none of his interest in the welfare of those for whom he died. Their names are

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graven on the palms of his hands. Blessed assurance!

"Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me.
'Forgive him, oh forgive,' they cry,
'Nor let this ransomed sinner die!'"

It is the vision of the uplifted Christ that gives his followers impetus and strength for the work of the kingdom. Paul on his way down to Damascus caught the vision, and it transformed his life. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" was his answer. He was ready for whatever awaited him: and thenceforth not duty but the love of Christ constrained him.

John the Evangelist had a like vision in the Isle of Patmos: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, . . . and I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks One like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the

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sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

If ever our courage fails, when the fountains of the great deep seem to be broken up, let us lift our eyes also to the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up. The darkest clouds are far this side of heaven, where in calm majesty the King wields his scepter. Let us look unto the celestial hills. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and though all the nearer mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

I have in my study a remarkable book called "The Ten Theophanies," by Dr. Baker, whose name is not unfamiliar in the annals of lighter literature. As his life was wearing to its close, he felt a consuming desire to present his view of the unveiling of God. The book, which was written with a hand growing constantly feebler, was finished at length in full view of heaven. Here are its concluding words: "Try to bring home to yourself this Friend of mine, who is God yet man, and man yet God. He is ever lovingly near, in the unlimited prime and plenitude and power of his everlasting grace. The man who is writing these

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lines cannot see them for happy tears. He trembles because unable to contain, while yet unable to express, the thought of *Immanuel,* God with us! And now, awaiting the appearing of our Lord, let me sound his praise; the blessed and only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. To Him be honor and glory everlasting!" The writer's labor of love was finished; the pen dropped from his trembling fingers; a new Theophany had burst upon his sight. He was in the midst of the beatific vision, at home with God!

To one who had thus looked on God, revealed in the majesty and holiness of His beloved Son, there must of necessity come a corresponding conviction of littleness and unworthiness. So was it with Peter on that morning by the lake of Galilee, when he and his fellow fishermen, having toiled all night and taken nothing, saw the Master on the shore. At His bidding they "cast their nets on the right side of the ship"; and then came the miracle! Peter had long known Jesus and endeavored to serve him; but in that wonderful moment he caught such a glimpse of his Lord's majesty and of the ineffable holiness which ever accompanies it that he was filled with an overmastering awe and forced to utter that strange and apparently inconsequent cry, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!" Thus to see Christ is to see ourselves, not "as ithers

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see us," but as we really are in the clear white light of his eyes.

Never until we have caught this vision shall we be the sort of Christians that we ought to be. Never until then shall we rightly apprehend our place in the mighty plan of God. Never until then shall we escape the drudgery of duty and enter on the joy of voluntary service with the cry, "Here am I; send me!"

A hopeless dreamer of dreams was Elijah until he caught the vision. He shook and trembled as the earthquake and the tempest and the fire passed by; afterward came the still small voice, "Go, return!" Then and there a new and better life began for him. He knew now that the king was on his throne, high and lifted up; and that this God was his God for ever and ever.

Oh, that the Vision might come to us, to us who feel our inefficiency and would fain enter upon a higher and more useful life! We may have the vision if we will. The heavens are open. And the Voice is calling, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Are we ready to answer, "Here am I; send me"?

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Section VII

"From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

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I would not fix the time, the day nor hour
  When thou with all thine angels shalt appear;
When in thy Kingdom thou shalt come with power.
  E'en now, perhaps, the promised day is near!

For though in slumber deep the world may lie,
  And e'en thy Church forget thy great command,
Still year by year thy coming draweth nigh,
  And in its power thy kingdom is at hand.

—*Jones Very.*

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"FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME"

THE technical term for the Second Coming of Christ is *parousia,* literally "a drawing near" or "being alongside." In the early Church a constant emphasis was laid upon this transcendent hope; and there is reason for profound regret that the edge of expectancy has so largely been permitted to wear off.

The ascension of Christ occurred in the year 33. As early as the year 66 Peter felt called upon to revive the languid spirit of the disciples in these words: "I write unto you; and I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" II Peter 3:1–4.

And now that nineteen centuries have passed, the followers of Christ are still waiting; and scoffers are still asking, "Where is the promise?" Are we to conclude that there has been some mistake? Is there really anywhere such a promise; and, if so, where?

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I. *It was given by the angels on the Mount of Ascension:* "He shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."

This promise of the Second Coming of Christ cannot be explained away by referring it to his influential presence. It is true that he has ever been the commanding figure in history, since the combined influence of all the Cæsars and Alexanders and Napoleons is not comparable with that of him who has come down through the centuries, marching on the heights of Bozrah with garments dyed red in the winepress of redeeming grace. But this does not answer the conditions of the promise, "He shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going."

Nor can it be explained away as a reference to the miracle of Pentecost. Our Lord did indeed so pour out his Spirit on that memorable day that his Church was baptized with fire and power for the great campaign before it. But this was not the coming referred to.

Nor was the prophecy fulfilled in the retributive coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem. He was present then with fan in hand to purge his threshing-floor; but this was with no such benignant glory as when he ascended into the heavens that opened to receive him.

Nor are the demands of this promise met by the sympathetic coming of Christ referred to in his words, "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you." Here is a wonderful truth, which is realized

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in the experience of every true follower of Christ; but it does not exhaust the matter in hand. The *parousia* lies deeper yet.

Still less can the promise be explained away by referring it to Christ's sustaining grace in the dying hour. It is true — wonderfully true — that he meets us at the threshold of the Valley of the Shadow and offers his rod and staff to comfort us; but this does not meet the conditions of the promise before us.

The prophecy given on the Mount of Ascension is that he shall come at a definite time and in a definite way; and this coming is further described in his own words as "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from . . . one end of heaven to the other." It is clear from such passages as these that his coming is to be a personal coming, at a definite time, in the clouds of heaven, and the holy angels with him.

II. *The promise runs through all the Scriptures like a golden thread.*

In the first prophecy of the Old Testament there is a distinct reference to the final triumph of the Seed of Woman over the power of sin. And thenceforward there is a continuous line of prediction with respect to the *parousia*. It is traceable everywhere in the Levitical system of Messianic rites and ceremonies as well as in the prophetic books.

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If the Old Testament speaks thus with no uncertain sound, the New Testament is clearer still. There are literally hundreds of allusions in the teaching of Christ and his apostles to his return and universal reign.

In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew we have what is familiarly known as "the *parousia* discourse"; and whatever of uncertainty there may be as to its interpretation in detail and particular, there is no room for any uncertainty as to the promise itself of his ultimate return and glorious reign in this world of ours.

The teaching of the apostles is of the same tenor. Paul and Peter, James and John, were all looking for his appearing in the clouds of heaven. The book of the Revelation would be a mere dream book, a panorama of meaningless visions, if the *parousia* were left out of it.

The Christians of the early Church took Christ and the apostles at their word, and awaited his coming with joyful expectancy. In trying times of persecution the hope of his appearing was their strength and support. Their customary greeting morning and night was *Maranatha,* "The Lord cometh!"

III. *The promise may be read clearly in the logic of events.*

If the angels had delivered no message to the disciples on that mountain in Galilee, if the Scriptures had made no prediction of the *parousia,* it would

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still be forced upon us by the fact that the centuries have been moving forward in converging lines of increasing light toward one focal point. What is that "one supreme divine event to which the whole creation moves"? Call it the "Golden Age" if you choose. It borrows all its luster from the fact that Christ, marching down through the centuries, has been flooding the world with light. He is coming to reign! "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

In the political world there are some unmistakable signs. To begin with, the ends of the earth are coming together. A man can go from New York to Hongkong more quickly and comfortably than he could go from New York to Santa Fé a hundred years ago. There are tunnels through the mountains, cobwebs of railways cover the land, cables undergird the seas and electric wires carry messages through the air. The words of Puck in "Midsummer Night's Dream," "I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," have been more than realized. It is not far to anywhere in these neighborly days of ours.

Again, the nations that dwelt in darkness are emerging into light. It is little more than half a century since Commodore Perry opened the ports of Japan; and Japan is one of the Great Powers today. It is less than half a century since Living-

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stone died on his knees in mid-Africa; and lo, the face of Ethiopia is turned toward the rising sun! It is scarcely a decade since the decree against foreigners was annulled in China and, behold, the Great Wall is no more. The darkness lifts! The nations are wheeling into line. What for? It is for thoughtful readers of history and the newspapers to ask, What shall the end be?

Moreover, the gates of the temple of Janus are wide open. The clash of Armageddon comes before the advent of the Prince of Peace. Read Matthew 24:6–8. War itself is destined to make an end of war. The Great Powers must see their armaments put to shame before their swords can be beaten into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. The roar of cannon must exhaust itself in absurd and futile strife before the angels' song can be heard again, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

In the religious world, also, there are unmistakable signs. For instance, the opening of the doors of the nations to the incoming of the gospel. In the "Missionary Concerts" of fifty years ago there were frequent prayers for the opening of these doors. No such prayer is heard to-day. The hands of the nations are beckoning, like those of the man of Macedonia, and all benighted peoples are calling, "Come over and help us!"

Consider, also, the enlistment of volunteers. In

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my Seminary days it was a difficult matter to induce theological students to offer themselves for missionary service; now it is almost impossible to restrain them. The Missionary Boards are embarrassed by eager volunteers. Only the choicest are selected to go.

And above all, observe the ingathering of souls. William Carey preached seven years in India without a sign of success; then Krishna Pal was converted. Now who shall count the converts of India? It seems but yesterday that our missionaries were permited to enter Korea, and to-day Korea is white unto the harvest. The heathen are coming to Christ, a nation in a day.

And in the world of unbelief there are signs. The decay of false religions must not be overlooked. Of all the great religions of the centuries there are only three which now have even a name to live: to wit, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity; and "two of these," as Max Müller said, "are moribund." The only living, growing, triumphing religion in the world is the religion of Christ.

The silencing of open and avowed infidelity must also be considered. At the beginning of the last century the air was rent with the blasphemous vociferations of Paine and Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau. There was not a nation which did not have its valorous cohort of boastful infidels shaking their clenched fists at God. The last of the Old Guard were Bradlaugh in England and Inger-

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soll in America; and they have gone their way.

And another of the significant signs is the multiplication of false teachers within the Church. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The disciples were repeatedly and most earnestly forewarned that in the last days false teachers would creep in to deceive the very elect. They were admonished that there must first be "a falling away" before Christ could come into his own. (II Thess. 2:3, 4.) In his *parousia* discourse our Lord announced that his coming would be preceded by "the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place." *

If there ever was a time when "the abomination of desolation" was entrenched in the Holy Place, it is surely when the integrity of the Scriptures is denied, the veracity of Christ impugned, his supernatural birth called in question, and every fundamental doctrine of his teaching exposed to derisive doubt. That time is now. If infidelity has ceased to fulminate its impieties outside of the Church, it is largely because the work has been undertaken and is being effectively carried on by men in canonicals. The Trojan horse is now within the sacred walls.

* The immediate reference is supposed to be the offering of a swine upon the altar of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes at the overthrow of the Holy City. In this manner he undertook to put to shame the institution of sacrifice, in which was symbolically set forth the offering of Christ as the Lamb of God.

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Shall we lose heart by reason of this fact? Not at all! If a hundred million of professing Christians were to be led away by false teachers into the wilderness of unbelief, there would still be four hundred millions on earth professing the name of Jesus and presumably true to their consecration vows: and that would be twice as many as there were a century ago!

> "Take heart! The waster builds again:
> A charmèd life old Goodness hath,
> The tares may perish; but the grain
> Is not for death!"

In view of these facts, what shall we say?

First. *Let us believe* the promise. For thus it is written and thus it must be. "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:8, 9.) If he delays it is not because he has forgotten, but because he is divinely patient with the children of men.

Second. *Let us be ready.* "For in an hour when ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Let us watch, therefore; not as those who stand with folded hands looking out of their windows, but rather like those who with their sleeves rolled up

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and sickle in hand are busy in the yellow fields.

It is recorded that when William the Conqueror came to England the barons prostrated themselves before him and took this vow: "I do become thy liege man, for life and limb and earthly regard; and I do pledge myself to keep faith and loyalty with thee, for life and death, as God shall help me." In a like spirit let us continually renew our consecration to Christ. For the highway must be cast up before he comes. The stones of stumbling must be gathered out. There is much to be done; but when it is done, oh, happy day, the heavens shall part asunder and his people shall cry, "Behold him!" Then we shall see him — *hisce oculis* — with these very eyes!

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"TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD"

THE prophecies of the Old Testament with reference to the Judgment were understood by the Jews to mean that in the fullness of time God would avenge their national wrongs and rebuild the Theocracy of former days. The Son of David, that is the Messiah, was to tread their enemies under foot, ruling them with a rod of iron, and thus restore the glory to Israel.

But in the teaching of Christ this event is projected along larger lines and invested with stupendous import. In his *Parousia* discourse he spoke in unmistakable terms of a Final Assize at which there would be an adjustment of all human affairs; as in this passage: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25: 31, 32.)

As to many particulars of the Judgment we cannot speak dogmatically; since our Lord's prophecies were designedly and for obvious reasons interwoven with predictions of such other events as the

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destruction of Jerusalem and the Pentecostal miracle: but some things stand out in bold relief and may be affirmed without doubt or misgiving.

I. *The Fact.* There is no possibility of misunderstanding the parables in which our Lord portrays the events of the Great Day.

And this is in clear accord with a universal intuition. The doctrine of the Judgment is not derived from the teachings of Christ; he simply puts his official imprimatur upon it. The thought is involved in the very conception of God. If the present confused order is a complete economy, then the world is governed either by chance or — which is a contradiction of terms — by an unjust God. If there is a Supreme Being in the universe, he must, as Anne of Austria said, be "a sure paymaster."

The thought of judgment is also derived from the very nature of man. We are made in God's likeness and, as normal beings, bound to have the full benefit of law. The lower orders are not so. If a dog shows himself to be incorrigibly vicious, he is muzzled or shot; but an immortal man cannot be disposed of in that way. He demands justice; and his Maker is bound, by the necessity of his nature, to grant it.

II. *The Judgment is to occur at a Definite Time.* Christ refers to it as "the Great Day," "the Day of the Lord, "the Last Day," and "That Day." *Dies iræ, dies illa!*

It is frequently said that the judgment is now

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going on. This is true only so far as that some of the consequences of sin are experienced here and now. "The bones of the wicked are full of the sins of their youth." He who violates a physical law is pretty certain to incur one or more of the ills that human flesh is heir to.

It cannot be maintained, however, that the present order is complete. This was the error of Job's friends, who argued that God governs the world upon a principle of minute retribution, so that every man is rewarded or punished here according to his works. On the contrary, the present order is one of vast confusion. The wicked are frequently exalted, so that they flourish like a green bay-tree; while the righteous go mourning all their days. How shall this be accounted for? Augustine says: "If no sins were punished in this present time, we should conclude that there is no God; but if all sins were punished here and now, we should conclude that there is to be no judgment." As matters are, we are constrained to follow the argument to its logical conclusion, which leads us to the Judgment Day.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the word "day" used in this connection is to be taken in its larger sense, as indicating a definite time. It is called "the last day" because it occurs upon the border line between time and eternity, closing the temporal order. Present events are marked off by the ticking of the pendulum; but there will be no

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chronometer in eternity. The procession of days will close with the "last day." When the angel stands with one foot upon the sea and the other upon the land, crying, "Time no longer!" then the books will be opened and there will be a "restoration of all things."

III. *Christ will be the Judge.* "He shall sit upon the throne of his glory." During his earthly ministry he disavowed the judicial function. He said, "God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3:17): and again, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." (John 12:47.) He refused to arbitrate a dispute about an inheritance, saying, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14.) In the case of the woman taken in adultery, he said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way: from henceforth sin no more." (John 8:11.)

But he distinctly asserts that in the rounding up of the present dispensation he will assume and exercise the function: "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22); "and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man." (John 5:27.) As Son of Man, that is the Messiah, he only is qualified to open the Book of Judgment: "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and didst pur-

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chase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests." (Rev. 5:9.) As God, he knows man through and through; and as man, he is able to sympathize with us. We say in common parlance, "Every man is entitled to be judged by his peers"; and, so far as this is concerned, there will be no occasion for complaint in the Great Day.

The fact that the Redeemer is to sit upon the throne of judgment is fraught with portentous omens for those who reject him. "They shall look on him whom they pierced"; and the thought of their folly and ingratitude will overwhelm them, so that they shall call out to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" But there is infinite comfort in this thought for those who have loved and followed Christ. Their Saviour is to be their Judge, and their Judge will also be their Advocate.

IV. *As Christ is to be the Judge, so the assembled nations shall be the audience.* "And before him shall be gathered all nations." A vast assemblage! The small and great, the just and unjust, all ages and generations of the children of men! The General Assize is come: the trumpet gives the summons: Oyez! Oyez!

The trial will be public. The books will be opened before the great assembly. Off with all

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masks! There will be no concealments then. Here men walk in dominoes and disguises; there every one will be seen *in propria persona*. "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known" (Matthew 10:26); and, "Whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." (Luke 12:3.)

V. *The principle upon which the Judgment will be administered is Impartiality.* The criterion will be an even balance.

"In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And in worst times the wretched price itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling there; the action lies
In its true nature; and we ourselves shall be compelled,
E'en to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence."

Justice, perfect and absolute! No mercy then, but a final adjudication under the exact terms of the moral law. We are now living under grace; but this is a probationary period, and death ends it. Here we may make an appeal, from justice to grace: but there will be no appeal in that day. The administration of justice will be so perfect, so impartial, that the worst sinner in the universe will be quite

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satisfied that the Judge has dealt fairly with him.

But justice means spiritual death; as it is written, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It is true that he that "doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby"; but where in the world is there a man who has kept the law? By the deeds of the law, therefore, shall no flesh be justified; for "there is none that doeth good, no not one."

Are none to be saved, then? Yes; multitudes! And they shall be saved in strict accordance with justice and under the most rigid terms of law. All who have believed in Jesus Christ shall enter into life. He will appear as their Advocate, saying, "I was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities; I bare their sins in my own body on the tree; I vindicated the law; I satisfied justice by expiating the penalty of their sin." They shall, therefore, go free. So shall God be manifestly "just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus," that is, of such as have complied with the conditions of his grace by accepting Christ and putting their trust in him.

In one of Luther's sermons he relates a dream in which he seemed to stand before the judgment bar. The books were opened and he saw his name attached to a long catalogue of sins. The adversary, at his elbow, said, "Behold, what thou hast done! Sins of omission and commission; sins thoughtless and deliberate; sins black and many; there is no hope for thee!" But to his great relief he per-

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ceived these words, written across the page, "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." So the touchstone of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." (John 3:36.)

But this faith is to be measured by its results; as the Lord said, "By their fruits ye shall know them"; and, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21, 22.) Let it be remembered, however, that the one work which is acceptable before God is the acceptance of his grace; as Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And all good works consequent upon this faith are such as proceed from gratitude to Christ and find their terminus in him. He gave the definition of a good work when he said to his disciples, who murmured because a certain woman had anointed him with precious nard, "Let her alone; . . . she hath wrought a good work *on me*." And again, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it *unto me*." In other words, as the one unpardonable sin is the rejection of Christ — unpardonable because it shuts the only door of mercy that was ever opened — so the one meritorious work, far-reaching and comprehensive, is the life beginning in faith and spent in the service of Christ.

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But what of those who have never heard of Christ or his gospel? "What is to become of the heathen?" We may rest assured that God will deal fairly with them. They will be judged by their light and not by ours. All the circumstances of their case will be duly considered, and no one among them will have reason to complain of the outcome. The lines of procedure are laid down in the Parable of the Householder and his Servants: "And that servant who knew his lord's will and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." (Luke 12:47, 48.) There are to be grades of punishment and degrees of happiness in eternity: and these will be meted out not indiscriminately, but with a due regard for all the circumstances of each individual case.

There is deep meaning in these words: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago sitting in sackcloth and ashes." The people of Tyre and Sidon had only the light of nature and "the law written in their members" to live by; but the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida knew the Gospel and rejected it. And again Jesus said, "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and

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shall condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." (Luke 11:31, 32.)

VI. *The final separation.* "He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." This is indicated also in the Parable of the Threshing-floor; tares to the fire and wheat to the garner (Matthew 13:37–43); and in the Parable of the Talents; to the faithful servant, "Well done; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"; to the unprofitable servant, "Cast ye him into outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:14–30); and in the Parable of the Ten Virgins: "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut" (Matthew 25:1–12); and in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus: "It came to pass that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes. . . . Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." (Luke 16:19–31.) Thus every man goes to "his own place"; that is, to the place for which his character and life have fitted him.

The question whether this separation is to be local

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or not is of slight moment. We cannot speak of eternal facts in the terminology of time and space. The important matter is that the separation will be real. I know a man and wife who have lived under the same roof for fifty years, and have yet been as far apart as the poles. It is clear that the righteous and unrighteous shall have nothing in common in the future life; they shall pursue eternally diverging paths, because they are at odds in the matter of supreme importance, that is, their relation with God.

One thing remains to be said: it is of God's mercy that we are warned in time. As yet we are living in the dispensation of grace. Life is offered *gratis* to all who will accept it. We may prefer to take our chances under the law. We may reject grace and insist on justice. This is for us to say. It is written of God that he will not "turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High." But if a man is afraid of justice and wants mercy, he must accept it here and now. There will be no appeal from law in the Great Day.

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Section VIII

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

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Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit every pious mind;
Come, pour thy joys on humankind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.

— *Charlemagne.*

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"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST"

IT is a mistake to think of the coming of the Holy Spirit as an after-thought in the divine plan. I am not forgetting the Day of Pentecost — the sound of a rushing, mighty wind, and the coming of the Spirit so potently that it was like lambent tongues of flame on the foreheads of the disciples. That was the birthday of the Christian Church and the beginning of the "Dispensation of the Spirit," distinctively so called. But the Spirit of God was always on earth as the Spirit of life.

There would be no life of any sort anywhere but for him. So we read that at the very beginning he "moved upon the face of the waters." The earth was "waste and void." Chaos and confusion! And the Spirit moved, literally "brooded," on the face of the waters, like a parent bird on the nest, warming death into life.

To begin at the bottom of things,— all physical life is from him. The life of the vegetable and animal world was induced by coming into touch with the Spirit of Life. Ask any scientist on earth about the origin of life, and he will tell you that, while we know very little, we can positively affirm that

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there is "no life except from life." There is no life in the sun nor in the rain nor in the soil; and when you have gotten these together you are still bound to call in the Spirit to brood upon the inanimate nest.

A little higher up we come to intellectual life, and here we meet with man. The fact that differentiates man from the lower orders is this: he can contemplate truth. No other living thing can do that. A man can formulate an argument; he can reason with another as I am now reasoning with you. He can, as Keppler says, "think God's great thoughts after him." Now, between physical life and this intellectual life there is a great gulf. How does intellectual life begin? Only by contact with the Life Agent, that is, the Spirit of God.

Then higher still we come to spiritual life. As intellectual life consists in the possibility of apprehending truth, so spiritual life is in the apprehension of holiness. Man was not holy at the beginning; he was merely innocent, as a graven image is free from sin. He had in him the potency of holiness; but when the ordeal came he fell; and all that was left was a magnificent ruin. There was, however, still a possibility of spiritual life in him.

The man who never has apprehended holiness is spiritually dead. How can he come to life? Only by touching the personal Source of life. This is the meaning of the vision of Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones. He was bewildered by the presence

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of death on every side; and a voice said, "Son of man, can these bones live?" He answered, "O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest." The voice then called, "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!" And the Breath came, and the dead stood upon their feet, clothed with flesh and animated, "an exceeding great army" of living men.

What is the practical importance of this? What have we personally to do with it? We want life; we must have this higher and eternal life, for which God created and intended us; and we shall never have it except as we come into a real and vital apprehension of the influence of the Spirit of Life as our Reprover, Reminder and Regenerator.

This is his threefold office.

He is our Reprover in this way: Jesus said, "And the Paraclete, when he is come, will convict the world in respect *of sin.*" The Spirit of Life wields a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Whenever we adequately feel the power of sin and the longing to escape from it, we may be assured that this proceeds from the Spirit of God. It is this that sends a man to the altar, reeling and staggering like the publican, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Thus he reproves us.

He is also our Reminder. As Jesus said, "He shall *take of mine and shall declare it unto you.*"

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And again, "He shall bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." It may be that some of us see no power in the Cross. You never will until you yield to the influence of the Spirit, without whom the Cross is a stumbling-block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek, while to him that believeth it is the very power and wisdom of God. He makes it clear to the convicted soul that herein and hereby is the only possible escape from the shame, the power, and the bondage of sin.

And He is our Regenerator. When a man, standing at the altar, beating on his breast, and lifting his eyes to the Cross, is moved to believe, the Spirit brings him *out of death into spiritual life* so that he becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus." This is the mystery of which Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew"— born of the Spirit — "he cannot see the kingdom of God."

What then? Is this the end of the matter? By no means; it is only the beginning. A man who has known the Spirit as his Reprover of Sin, his Reminder of Christ and his Regenerator is just beginning to live; what he wants thenceforth is more life. It is the special function and the prerogative of the Spirit to give life "more abundantly."

At this point he becomes our Teacher, Sanctifier and Invigorator.

As our Teacher he shows us the meaning of spiritual things. For spiritual things are spiritually

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discerned; that is to say, they are discerned through the influence of the Spirit of God.

The Earl of Chatham, being in the Highlands once, attended a village church where the preacher set forth in a very profound sermon the doctrine of regeneration; whereupon the earl knitted his brows in perplexity, just as Nicodemus did who said, "How can these things be?" As he was passing out he saw a peasant woman and, being curious to know what she thought of it, he said, "My good woman, this is a great mystery, is it not?" "My lord," she answered, "do you not understand?" "No," said he, "I confess I do not." "Well, my lord, may the Spirit touch your eyes with eye-salve that you may see. There is no other way."

Here is a man reading his Bible with knitted brows. He cannot understand it. He longs for some interpreter to explain it. Let him get down upon his knees and entreat the help of the third Person of the ineffable Godhead, one of whose official functions is to throw light upon the Word of God. The promise of Christ is, "He will guide you into all the truth."

Here is a Christian living at a poor dying rate. He wishes that he might grow more rapidly unto the measure of the fullness of the stature of a man. But why indulge in vain wishes? Let him get down upon his knees and invoke the influence of the Spirit, another of whose official functions is to stimulate our growth in grace.

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Here is another Christian bowed down under an intolerable weight of sorrow. He cannot understand why Providence has so afflicted him. But why complain when the way to comfort is open? For here again we come upon one of the special functions of the Spirit as the Comforter. The word in the original is "Paraclete," which means "one running to answer a cry." He comes like a mother to a weeping child. It is for him to untie the gordian knots of Providence and enable us to see that the Lord doeth all things well.

Here is another Christian who lacks assurance. He does not know whether he is really saved or not. He worries over it so that he cannot sleep. What shall he do? Let him get down upon his knees and call upon the Spirit; for it is the Spirit that "*beareth witness* with our spirit that we are children of God."

And here is still another who feels that he is of little or no consequence in the kingdom of God. He has no special abilities, no equipment for service; he is simply a minimum Christian, and yet would fain make his life tell. If he is in earnest, let him entreat the Spirit for a baptism of fire and power. For the Holy Ghost is the great Energizer. He can take the weakest man and make a spiritual giant of him.

Here is a Church becalmed. Its pastor is like a dead man at the helm and its members are like dead men among the shrouds. What is needed? "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe

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upon it!" When Paul asked the members of the Church at Ephesus, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" the answer was, "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given." What fruit could be expected of a vine like that?

Of all the promises of Scripture there is none more heavily laden with possibilities than this: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Blessed *a fortiori!* Why should we ever be weak or go mourning, "My leanness, O my leanness!" when the infinite Source of power is at our command? We are precisely as strong and useful as we are willing to be. The weakest has all the power he is willing to take. Abundant provision has been made for us.

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

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Section IX

"The holy catholic Church, the communion of saints."

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Wild, wild wind, wilt thou never cease thy sighing?
  Dark, dark night, wilt thou never wear away?
Cold, cold church, in thy death-sleep lying,
  Thy Lent is past, thy Passion here, but not thine Easter-day.

Peace, faint heart, though the night be dark and sighing;
  Rest, fair corpse, where thy Lord himself hath lain;
Weep, dear Lord, above thy bride low lying;
  Thy tears shall wake her frozen limbs to life and health again.

— *Charles Kingsley.*

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"THE CHURCH"

IN the teaching of Jesus the Church is not identified with the Kingdom, though there is a vital relation between them. No doubt there are names on the roster of the Church which are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life; and contrariwise there are true Christians outside of the organized fellowship of faith. But the Church, however imperfect, is the prime factor in the solution of the problem of the Kingdom. It is the great organism through which God is working, by the power of his Spirit, for the casting down of the strongholds of iniquity and the establishment of truth and righteousness on earth. As such, it is entitled to the affectionate regard and co-operation of all right-thinking men.

If the Church has not been ideally efficient in her work of social regeneration all along the centuries, it may be asserted without fear of contradiction that even in her feeblest moods she has shown more power in her little finger than all other organizations in their loins. She is not what she ought to be; but by the grace of God she is what she is.

The Church is mentioned by the name *ecclesia* only

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twice in the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 16:17–19 and 18:15–18); but this is of slight significance. For that matter, the Incarnation and the Atonement, the two fundamental doctrines of the Christian system, are not thus named by Christ at all, though they run through his teachings like a twisted cord. In like manner he has much to say about the Church by implication. He draws the silhouette clearly, leaving his apostles to fill in all necessary detail under the inspiration of the Spirit which he confers upon them.

It will appear, however, that the two passages referred to contain the sum and substance of the whole matter. They are *multum in parvo,* as we shall see.

In the first passage (Matthew 16:17–19) *Christ stands voucher for the Church as his own.* "Upon this rock will I build *my* Church." This should be a sufficient answer to those who speak of the Church as a human institution. Our Lord owns, approves, and champions it. Elsewhere to the same effect the Church is set forth as his bride (Revelation 19:6–8): and again as his household (Ephesians 2:19): and again as his body (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

The Church is here characterized as a Building. "Upon this rock will I *build* my Church." This should be observed by those who say that our Lord "took no steps to organize his disciples into a formally constituted society." It is asserted, on the contrary, that history has never shown an organization so ideally constituted. It was not thrown to-

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gether at random but put together by a divine Architect after a symmetrical plan.

The Cornerstone is Christ. "Upon *this rock* will I build my Church." Long campaigns of controversy have been waged as to the meaning of those words. The question is, What is this rock? The Romanists say, "It is Peter"; but Christ did not say so. His statement was, "Thou art *Petros,* and on this *petra* I will build my Church." The words are cognate but not identical; the former is masculine and the latter feminine; *petra* is a rock; *Petros* is a stone, hewn out of the rock. At the time when our Lord said this, he was pursuing his journey through Cæsarea-Philippi, his face set steadfastly toward the Cross. He greatly desired his disciples to be informed as to his divine character and mission; but thus far they had not been able to bear it. He was now moved to inquire, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" To this they gave various answers. "But who say ye that I am?" Then Peter witnessed his good confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Whereupon Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of John: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." And then and there he renamed him Peter, "Son of the Rock," in recognition of his valorous words. That good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was indeed the mightiest of all truths and worthy to be the foundation of the Church.

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Here is the seal of legitimacy among the various denominations; that is, the headship of Christ, "Son of the living God." The Romanists say, *Ubi ekklesia, ibi Christos;* that is, "Where the Church is, there is Christ;" but precisely the reverse is true: Where Christ is, there is the Church.

As to the Superstructure of the Church. It is a stone building. Here is the order: Christ, the cornerstone; then the apostolic company as the stone foundation; then the ever-increasing multitude of believers as stones in the wall. Thus Paul says, "Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together." (Ephesians 2:20–22.)

The new beginning was when our Lord gathered around him a little company of disciples in the upper room. In his sacerdotal prayer he said, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me." (John 17:9.) Later, in the same prayer, he said, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (John 17:20, 21.) He was looking beyond the Cross; he saw an innumerable procession passing down the ages, the multitude of the re-

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deemed, who were given him by the Father as the fruit of the travail of his soul.

As to the Equipment of the Church. In order to the accomplishment of its great purpose, to wit, the setting up of a Kingdom of truth and righteousness, the building must be filled with vitalized machinery. To this end our Lord breathed on his disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit"; and thereupon the Church became the antitype of Ezekiel's vision of the wheels: wheels within wheels, wheels full of eyes; and within the wheels a Spirit; and "whither the Spirit was to go they went."

Thus the Church was endowed with life. As Peter says, "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house." (I Peter 2:5.) Wonderful stones, each with a throbbing heart, each from its place in the wall stretching out eager hands of helpfulness, each with a voice to sing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love!"

Moreover, the Church, under the power of the Spirit, becomes the depository of truth. It is called "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15); which means that it is the intermediary source of authority as to the great verities of the eternal life. It is customary to speak of a threefold authority in these premises: the inner conscience, which may err, but never when controlled by the Spirit; the Church, which also may go wrong, but never when controlled by the Spirit; and the Scriptures, which are always true and ultimate, though

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they also must be interpreted by the Spirit of God.

Our Lord gives, also, in this equipment of the Church a peculiar power in prayer. The fervent effectual prayer of one righteous man availeth much; much more the united prayers of the Church. Jesus said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven, for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:19.) Here we have the charter of public worship.

The Church is, still further, endued with power for service. Our Lord said to his disciples, "Tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49.) And there they tarried until, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon them with "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind"; and, thus invigorated, they went forth to the conquest of the world. The Church is impotent without this dynamic baptism. Its success through the centuries has ever been measured by its willingness to receive it.

In our Lord's second reference to the Church he confers the power of "binding and loosing." This, as plainly appears from the context, has reference to rules of order and discipline (Matthew 18:15–18).

The Jews had a proverb, "Shammai bindeth and Hillel looseth"; which is to be interpreted by the historic difference of those teachers as to questions

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of order. Josephus says, "The Pharisees have power to bind and loose at will." We note an exercise of this authority by the Apostles in the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15). A like authority in the matter of discipline was illustrated in the case of the offender at Corinth who was excommunicated to the end that he might be reclaimed (I Corinthians 5). This man was probably of good social position; and for that reason his offence was winked at; but the Corinthian Church was enjoined to deal judicially with him. He was to be bound in order that he might be loosed. It would be well for all concerned if there were a more frequent exercise of this power in the Church of to-day.

The "power of the keys" was conferred upon Peter as a reward of his good confession (Matthew 16:19).

The keys referred to were not those of the Celestial City. The picture of Peter sitting as a ticket-taker at its gate is a ludicrous perversion of the truth. There are no keys of heaven. Its twelve gates are never closed. The souls that wander in eternal darkness are free to enter if they will; but, alas! their characters are so fixed that they cannot because they will not.

As a reward for his loyalty to the fundamental doctrine of the Lordship of Christ, Peter was commissioned to throw open the doors of the visible Church to the Gentiles. This was done on the day of Pentecost. Previously, the Jews alone, as a

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chosen people, had been included in the charmed circle; but on that day, when the influence of the Holy Ghost came down on the assembled company, the middle wall of partition was thrown down. In answer to the cry, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter, as spokesman of the Church, said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins. . . . For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." Thus the keys were turned and the gates rolled back to admit not Jews alone but all the penitent and believing children of men.

It is obvious that in this matter Peter stood solitary and alone. To speak of his "successors" would be as presumptuous as to make a similar claim with respect to Columbus in his discovery of America. The doors being opened once for all, there was no further need of those keys.

A word now as to *the power of absolution* which our Lord conferred upon the Church in the words, "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:23.) Let it be observed that this authority was bestowed not upon Peter only with his fellow-apostles, but upon a considerable company of other believers who were gathered in the upper room; so that whatever this power of absolution may mean, it is vested in all believers alike.

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It does not mean judicial or plenary absolution; for "who can forgive sins but God alone?" But there is a declaratory absolution which lies within the province of all true followers of Christ. Jesus said, 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." What for? He was sent to deliver the world from sin, by the virtue of his great sacrifice. We are sent, in like manner, to point the nations to the Cross. The true absolution is by faith in Jesus Christ, and it is for us to declare it, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

And this proclamation is ratified in heaven. The humblest of Christians is commissioned to say, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"; that is, sins are remitted or retained on condition of acceptance or rejection of Christ crucified. Here is our great privilege; here also is our great responsibility, since we may retain the sins of the impenitent upon them by our neglect to warn them of the wrath to come; as it is written, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, . . . he shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand." Thus we are, in a sense, responsible for the destinies of our fellow-men.

Out of this general equipment of the Church flows logically and necessarily *the Great Commission:* "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel"; that is, go and proclaim absolution for all who will

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receive it; and the promise is: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The Church thus equipped and endowed shall be immortal till its work is done. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

But the Church is not to endure forever; only until its work is done. There will be no further use for its vitalized machinery when the Kingdom is established on earth; that is, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Church and the Kingdom will then be identical. The holy city, New Jerusalem, will come "down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband"; and a great voice will be heard, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." (Revelation 21:2, 3.)

Meanwhile the Church stands, in pursuance of her Lord's promise, as the great miracle of the ages. She has done her work imperfectly, bowing oftentimes at false shrines, untrue to her espousal vows; yet she has continued to live because she had an appointed work to do. Notwithstanding her imperfections of character and vacillation of purpose, hers has been the one transforming influence through the history of the ages. Like Milton's angel of the morning, she has carried a torch that has illuminated the darkness all along her way. And her power is

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as the power of an invincible army to-day; naught can avail against her. The temple which our Lord established upon the rock of his sovereign Messiahship rises like the House Magnifical, "without the sound of hammer or of ax"; and will continue to rise, stone upon stone, until the top-stone is laid with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it!" Then the Glory of the Lord will fill the house as the Shekinah filled the Temple of the olden time; for the Church is divinely destined to be a Temple ultimately fit for the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

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"HOLY"

WHAT is holiness? On the negative side it is cleanness, or entire freedom from sin. This means more than a profession of religion, more than any formal orthodoxy which consists in a mere intellectual apprehension of spiritual things, more than so-called morality or outward conformity to the moral law.

The holiness enjoined upon us is a through-and-through holiness. It was well defined by a boy in one of the ragged schools of Ireland who, when asked by the visiting priest, "What is holiness?" answered, "It is to be clean inside." It is to have a clean heart, a clean mind, a clean conscience, and a clean will.

But this is merely the negative side of it. To be innocent is not enough. A graven image is free from sin. In addition to this we are required to be positively holy; that is, to put on all the attributes which enter into a character conformed to the likeness of God. In the rainbow which overarches his throne are all the colors of the solar spectrum which, when passed through a prism, are resolved into the white solar ray. Thus the divine attributes are summed up in holiness. Can a mortal man be ex-

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pected to conform to such perfection? A drop of rain reflects the rainbow as perfectly as does the surface of the broad sea. So up to the full measure of our being we may reflect the holiness of God.

But where is the man who ever did so? If it be true that there are no sinners in heaven, it is equally true that there are no saints on earth: "For there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

It is a mistake to regard the Church as an association of good people. If this were so, no true Christian would be associated with it; because a true Christian does not claim to be good, but only trying to be.

In point of fact the people who profess to be good are all outside of the Church, lifting their eyebrows and pointing their fingers at inconsistent Christians. These moralists profess to be so good that they really need no help from any association of praying, struggling souls. They can stand alone, as supermen, asking no odds of God or Christ or their fellow-men.

One of the reasons why Christians enter the Church is because, conscious of their infirmities, they feel the need of sympathy and mutual intercession. They do not profess "to have already obtained," or that they are "already made perfect," but, with much erring and stumbling, they "press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

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This "high calling" is to holiness, which is the goal of the Christian life. For the attainment of this goal the Church provides many important helps.

I. *A Creed.* The Church is called "the Pillar and Ground of Truth"; because it is the depository of the Scriptures, which are the inspired and therefore trustworthy Word of God. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

A consistent member of the Church regards the Bible, authenticated by Christ's teaching with respect to it, as the Court of Final Appeal in all problems respecting the eternal life.

II. *A Moral Code,* or rule of conduct. This is contained in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount; which are universally conceded to be the two faultless ethical symbols. In these we have a perfect monograph of holiness, or "wholeness," as a combination of all the graces which combine to form character. The Sermon on the Mount is an exposition of the Ten Commandments so searching, so far reaching, so severe in its analysis of morality that it is like a two-edged sword, dividing asunder the very soul and spirit of a man.

III. *A Commission:* to wit, "Seek ye first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

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The right-living man is a busy man. His business is busy-ness. But business is of two kinds.

There is a transient sort of business which has to do exclusively with the here and now. It puts the emphasis on the acquisition of wealth or on the pursuit of pleasure or on the emoluments of this world. Is this sort of business worth while? Our Lord did not belittle the importance of earning a livelihood or of gaining a competence or of acquiring legitimate honors; but these were to him mere incidentals. Alas that men should so often, by overestimating them, be sidetracked on the highway of life! There is nothing more lamentable than for one to spend his life in pleasure or to devote his energies to the getting of a million, and die with nothing to show for it.

But the business of the Kingdom — that is worth a man's while! When Jesus said, "Seek ye first his Kingdom," he meant precisely that we are to put the Kingdom first, remanding all other employment whatsoever to a subordinate place. His service, which is the setting up of his Kingdom in this world, is to be always first and foremost. To put it anywhere else is to fall short of the best possibilities of life.

These then — a Creed, a Moral Code, and a Commission — are the three helps which the Church affords toward the attainment of that holiness without which no man can ever see God.

It must be reiterated, however, that while the

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Church is designed to be the radiating center and power-house of holiness, no church member has attained unto holiness but is only striving that way.

In the second century the satirist Celsus assailed the Church as an assembly of reprobates. He said, "I have seen in your conferences some who are recognized as drabs and drunkards and thieves. You have none of the richer and more learned class. Your Master himself, who was a humble carpenter, is in evidence as to the character of his followers, inasmuch as he said, 'I am come not to call the righteous but sinners.'" Origen answered him on this wise, "You are right in saying that our Lord came not to call the righteous but sinners, but you are unfair when you pause there. His words were, 'I am come to call not the righteous but sinners *to repentance.*' The former profligates whom you have seen in our assemblies were taken by our Master out of the very gutters and transformed into newness of life. He called them to contrition and reformation; and their improved walk and conversation are a testimony to his saving grace."

This is the glory of the gospel, that it goes out into the highways and hedges in quest of lost sinners and sets them on their feet, with the past forgiven and the future glorified, with hearts full of peace and faces toward the sky. This is the factor in the gospel that, as Alexander Pope said, makes a Christian "the highest style of man."

In the necessity of the case, religion has its out-

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ward forms. It has shrines, altars and liturgies, rites and ceremonies, Sabbaths and fast days. These are important; but the emphasis is not there. Just here is where the Jews made their mistake in the time of Isaiah: "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to evil; learn to do well."

The passage of eight centuries of discipline and divine remonstrance did not correct this formalism. When Christ came he found the Pharisees — who were the religious leaders and best church-members of their time — still placing the emphasis on outward form at the expense of inward grace. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law! . . . These ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." He reproved them for making long prayers in the synagogues and at the corners of the streets to be seen of men; and for casting their offerings with a great flourish into the brazen mouth of Corban that they might have glory of men. And to his disciples he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Observe the word "exceed." He does not say that the Pharisees were to be blamed

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for paying due regard to devotional forms, but only for pausing there. The forms had their uses, but merely as indicating the inward grace of holiness; and unfortunately these Pharisees were without it.

I have never known a saint, but I have known many strugglers, "stretching forth unto the things which are before." For such the end is sure. The seed-corn always ripens in God's field, but in the fullness of time. "He that believeth shall not be in haste." The patient, hopeful, ever-striving Christian will find the King's chamberlain awaiting him at the gateway of the Holy City; from whom he will receive "the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints."

Our subject is an intensely practical one. It has to do distinctly with the responsibilities of our present life. The joy of living is in aiming high. The dignity of manhood is in lofty ideals. It is related that when the high-priest Jaddua came out of Jerusalem to meet Alexander, whose army was besieging the city, he wore a miter on which was inscribed "Holiness unto the Lord," which shone so bright that Alexander and his guard fell prostrate. A fable, do you say? Nay, I have seen such power in many a Christian life.

I knew an old man once who habitually sat in the chimney-corner with the Bible on his knee. The light of heaven was on his face and the glory of God shone in his eyes. With the help of an untrembling faith, like a lantern in hand, he had trav-

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ersed deep valleys of pain and sorrow and adversity on his way toward the Heavenly City. Oh, no; holiness is no dream! It is no "baseless fabric of a vision," but a splendid possibility put before us by the gracious Father of us all.

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"CATHOLIC"

THE word means world-wide or universal.

I. The Church is catholic in its intent. The Cross, which stands at its center, throws a luminous shadow toward the four points of the compass and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It is written of Christ that "he tasted of death for every man," which makes every man salvable; and he himself said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

II. The Church, like the gospel it stands for, is universal in its adaptation to the spiritual needs of all sorts and conditions of men. Its essential truths, i.e., those which are necessary to salvation, are so simple that all can understand them. Our Lord emphasized this fact when he took a child upon his knee and said, "Except ye turn, and become as little children" (in your attitude of receptivity as to truth and of obedience as to righteousness), "ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

III. The Church has a world-wide invitation to extend to all who sincerely desire to get right with God. Its great word is *whosoever;* as it is written, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that

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heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

The Church points to an open door — but to one door only — into the kingdom; as Jesus said, "I am the door, . . . I am the way: no one cometh unto the Father but by me." It makes this door wide enough for all sinners who feel their need of salvation, and too narrow for any others. It extends a universal welcome in the words of its Master, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

IV. The Church aims at nothing less than universal conquest. It advances with the song:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His Kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

It is a militant body, in the necessity of the case; exclusive in its claims and inclusive in its vast ambition. It is true to its divine franchise only so far as it is obedient to its divine commission, "Go ye into all the world and evangelize."

The Church to-day is suffering from an atrophy of its militant nerve. The lost note in its ecclesiastical program is Evangelism. There must be a return to the plan divinely marked out. A new Reformation is called for, a marshaling of the professed followers of Christ in a crusade for souls.

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Back to the way of which the Master spoke, "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you!" Back to the business in hand, which is "to seek and save."

Nothing else will answer. All other service is incidental to this. To reject it for "social service" or any other form of service is as if an errand boy, who had been sent to carry a prescription to a death-bed, should turn aside from his vital errand to pluck a splinter from a playmate's hand. The Voice was never more clearly heard than now, "This is the way: walk ye in it!"

There are those who hold apparently that Christ had no higher purpose than to make this world a better place to live in; wherefore he fed the hungry, healed the sick, and devoted himself to the betterment of social conditions generally. In other words, he treated man as if he were an animal to be groomed for a day's work; as if "victuals and drink were the whole of his diet."

But what does Christ himself say about his mission? He declares that he came "to seek and to save the lost." He says, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." What did he mean by life? Surely not the hand-breadth of time which we are living here and now. To him man was more than "a stomach and its appurtenances." He treated man as a child of God, with God's breath in him, and therefore destined to live for ever.

It is true he did not minimize the ministries of the

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present life. He relieved men of their distresses and healed their sicknesses; but that was always subordinate to his greater work. The emphasis was consistently placed on the eternal interests of men. "The life," he said, "is more than the food, and the body than the raiment." He pressed hard on the importance of other-worldliness as against worldliness. His great question was, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" What are health and happiness and wealth and all the world's emoluments in comparison with the endless life?

His mission was to make it possible for men to attain to that high destiny; and this he did by dying vicariously for them, in expiation of their sins, so that whosoever would believe in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And he speaks no less definitely as to the mission of his Church: "As the Father sent me, so send I you"; that is, to seek and to save those who are lost in sin. And this salvation is not to be accomplished by social service; but by the preaching of the evangel; to wit: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

What is the result of all this? Time was when preachers everywhere called from their pulpits, "Come to Jesus!" In some quarters it is gravely announced that the time has passed by for that sort

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of appeal. And wherever that sentiment prevails there is a spiritual famine. Conversions are apparently not desired. The only gospel that is preached in such quarters is the fractional gospel: "As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men."

It is as if one were to say, "Give a man a square meal, a good suit of clothes, a tight roof over his head, better wages for his work, a favorable environment, a competence for threescore years and an old-age pension, and what more is to be desired?" This is to send him out into eternity with no provision for his journey and no preparation for the everlasting æons before him. I say this is not real philanthropy. Certainly it is not Christianity. It is the teaching of the god of this world and not of the Saviour, who came distinctly to equip men for eternal life.

The Church must cease to be at cross purposes with Christ. When it consents to follow him wholly it will have no more occasion to complain of leanness and barrenness. When the Church gets right with her Lord and is "willing in the day of his power," the promise will be fulfilled, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." Then shall souls spring up like willows by the water courses and God's word shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish its work in turning the hearts of men to their Redeemer. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth into

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singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

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"THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS"

THERE is only one Church in the world. It had its beginning at the gate of Paradise when the first sinner received the original promise of the salvation of Christ, who, as the Seed of woman, was to come in the fullness of time to bruise the serpent's head and deliver the world from sin.

The Church is constituted of all living and translated sinners who have ever believed in Christ from the beginning until now. This is the Communion of Saints. Under the Old Economy it was made up of those who were looking forward to the Messiah; under the New of those who have been looking back to him.

In this great fellowship there has never been a schism. There have been differences of opinion on minor points, but nothing to affect the vital relation of Christians to Christ as the author and finisher of their faith.

I. To begin with, the various bodies or "denominations" of true believers are animated by a common life. Christ is the life; the beating heart, the throbbing pulse, the heaving breast, the glistening eye, the busy brain, the eager hand: in other words,

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the Church is "his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:23.)

It is obvious that branches of the body which is thus animated must draw nearer to each other as they approach this living Center, just as radiating beams of light converge toward the sun. The various denominations may and do differ in matters of minor importance, but they are called after the same Name — the Name which is above every other in heaven and on earth — and all are agreed in receiving him as Alpha and Omega, first, last, midst, and all in all.

II. Moreover, they are one in their enduement of power. There are indeed "diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all." A papal hand may hold a denomination in rigid oneness like that of a bar of steel: but true unity is of a different sort. If the bar of steel be wrought into wheels and levers and pinions; and if these be joined together and articulated so as to form a subtle mechanism; and if this mechanism be pervaded through and through with vital energy, we have a working combination which is vastly better, because more productive, than a rigid unit. The Church is made up of many factors, which are thus brought together, not in a formal or circumstantial but in a dynamic harmony, by the power of one Spirit who energizes all.

III. The Church is one, moreover, by reason of the mutual sympathy of its members. In the felici-

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tous figure of "the body of Christ" we have a definition of the Communion of Saints. The body is traversed by a nervous system, so sensitive throughout that, if you tread upon the foot, there is an instant thrill of sympathetic pain at the finger-tips. The parallel is perfect: when, for example, the hardships of missionaries in the service of the Wesleyan Church in Africa are reported, there is an instantaneous wave of commiseration transcending all denominational barriers. If it be true that the crucial test of friendship is adversity, then the denominations prove their amity in this sharing of burdens and mingling of tears.

IV. Still further, the true Church, in all its various branches, is one by virtue of a common purpose, to wit, the salvation of the world. All other considerations are ignored or remanded to a subordinate place. Their common watchword is "The World for Christ!"

V. The Unity of the Church is manifest also in its equipment for service. All true workers are harnessed alike with the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and particularly the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. The best evidence of loyalty to Christ is found in the scars of service. Among those who stand on the firing line of evangelism, exposed to constant danger and privation, there is no difference of opinion as to fundamental truths; and it is meet and proper that sciolists should

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lay their hands upon their mouths in the presence of such men.

VI. The Church demonstrates its unity, also, in the confident hope of the ultimate triumph of Christ. The text of William Carey's pioneer Sermon on Missions in 1793 was, "Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: spare not; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes" (Isa. 54:2); and his discourse was divided into two heads: First, "Undertake great things for God"; Second, "Expect great things from God." It was this sermon that struck the keynote of the modern missionary movement. What wonders have been wrought since that day!

I see an army of heralds climbing mountains, fording rivers and crossing deserts; of whom it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" I see the tottering walls of pagan strongholds rent asunder like Jericho by the foolishness of preaching. I hear the fluttering of wings; and behold, souls are coming to Christ as doves flocking to their windows. Far off are the white sails of the ships of Tarshish, that bring the sons and the daughters of the nations, and their silver and gold with them. Hither come the rams of Nebaioth and the dromedaries of Midian; caravans laden with the glory of kings. I hear the clash of arms in mid-heaven, mingled with a sound of breaking chains! Great Armageddon is at hand!

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I see the lifting of war clouds, the blooming of gardens, the opening of the heavens: and the voice of a great angel is proclaiming, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them and be their God."

In all these things we observe the true "communion of saints." Here is no mere sentimental clasping of hands and singing of "Blest be the tie that binds"; but a real blending of spirits, made manifest in sympathetic loyalty to a common Lord and in practical devotion to a common cause.

Church Union needs no exploiting. It is an accomplished fact. But, alas, there are many professed followers of Christ who rule themselves out of it.

On one occasion, when Handel was rehearsing the oratorio of The Messiah he arrested the performance to say, "I miss one flageolet!" He had detected the default of a member of his great orchestra. Friend, are you neglecting your part in the service of the Kingdom? Does God miss *you?* Oh, fail not here! The air is vibrant with tidings of conquest. God asks you to coöperate with him in bringing back the world to truth and righteousness. The Church is on the march. Fall in! The royal standards onward go!

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Section X

"The forgiveness of sins."

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Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
  Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
  And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done;
  For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
  Others to sin, and made my sins their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
  A year or two, but wallowed in a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done;
  For I have more.

—*John Donne.*

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"THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS"

I MARVEL at the versatility of God. He never made two things precisely alike. One star differeth from another in glory. The leaves of the forest are as dissimilar in their lace-like tracery as though each had been woven after a separate pattern in a loom of its own. This is not our way of doing things. In the Metropolitan Museum is a statue of the Greek Slave, of which the artist made three replicas, each of them so closely copied after the original that no one can tell them apart. God works differently. There are sixteen hundred millions of people in the world, and no duplicates! By the Bertillon method a criminal may be recognized and convicted on the mere evidence of his thumb-prints.

I. But there is one point at which there is no difference among men. All are alike as to their complicity in sin. Paul says, "There is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." In another place he says that all are "concluded under sin." The word concluded means literally "shut up"; as if all were imprisoned in the same dungeon and awaiting trial on the same charge. So it is written, "God looked down from heaven

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upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God. Every one of them is gone back; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

If there is anybody who takes issue with that proposition or thinks possibly that he is that one, let him speak up. What, none? Then it may be assumed that we agree thus far.

II. Now as to the penalty of sin. The law says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." What is this death? Physical death is a cessation of the functions of physical life. When the eyes no longer see and the nerves are without feeling and the heart is silent, we say, "The man is dead." By the same token, spiritual death is an arrest of the functions of spiritual life. When the soul ceases to respond to the divine voice and conscience is heedless of the divine law and the emotions are unstirred by divine love, we are warranted in saying that the man is spiritually dead. For the soul lives only in God.

If so, then spiritual death begins here and now. And it continues as long as sin abides. How long is that? Forever, so far as reason can see. For without holiness — that is, freedom from sin — no man shall see God.

This is hell. This is the outer darkness and eternal exile. This is the worm that gnaws at conscience and dieth not. This is the fire that is never quenched. To be exiled from God! Not because God is not forever willing to receive all those who

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will come unto him. The twelve gates of heaven will never be closed; but the fixity of character makes it impossible for an outlaw to enter in. He can forever, but forever he will not; because in the nature of the case "sin is enmity against God." Though the gates were thronged with angels and archangels, beckoning and crying "Welcome!" the exile would prefer his own place in the outer darkness to the holy atmosphere of the redeemed in light. This is the self-inflicted penalty of sin, to be away from God. A man shut up in his sinful pleasures here and now may be quite content to live without God; but think what an eternity of this must be!

III. What is the remedy? There is none. There is absolutely none within the purview of human reason. As Lady Macbeth said, "What's done cannot be undone." The record of the mislived past is written, and nothing can unwrite it. I have broken the law, and its irrevocable sentence has gone forth against me.

IV. What then is to be done? Nothing? Must we surrender to despair? By no means. The Lord's arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

Here comes Christ!

"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it upheld him."

One of the memorable cases in the criminal juris-

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prudence of our country was that of Professor Webster of Harvard College, who was arrested for murder and found guilty. The man who presided at his trial was Chief Justice Shaw, a classmate of the prisoner at the bar. When the jury came in with its verdict, the judge was so overcome that tears poured over his cheeks and he could not utter a word. At length he arose to pronounce the death sentence, saying in a broken voice, "The law must have its course!"

Thanks be to God, the law need not have its course at the Great Assize; "for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," hath done, to the end that our sins might be forgiven and the righteousness of the law be made manifest in us.

But how could even the divine Christ forgive sin? He could do this only by satisfying the demand of the broken law. The sin itself, as an established fact, could not be removed; but if its penalty were endured the guilty might be permitted to go free. And this is precisely what Christ did. He took our place before the bar of justice and died vicariously for us, as it is written: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Our Substitute drank for us the last drop in the dregs of the bitter cup of death; in our behalf he, in a very literal sense, "descended into hell."

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The climax of his suffering was reached when, in the unnatural darkness of Golgotha, he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus for a moment — and a moment in his divine life was the equivalent of an eternity in ours — he endured the horror of exile from God! And because he thus went down, down, down into the uttermost depths where I deserved to go, he satisfied the law in my behalf and nailed to his Cross the accusation that was against me.

Is there any condition affixed to the benefits of his expiatory work? One only; namely, faith. And faith is simply an acceptance of the overtures of divine mercy which are offered in and through him. Pardon is to be had for the taking! "The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life." Nevertheless, unless we take it we will never have it.

But faith has an antecedent and a consequent. Its antecedent is repentance; that is, an acknowledgment of sin and a sincere desire to forsake it. Its consequent is confession of Christ. "Repent, believe, and be baptized," is the formulary of spiritual life. Baptism is an open confession of Christ. A refusal to confess him is a practical admission of insincerity. The assurance of pardon is like "ointment in the hand, which bewrayeth itself." So it is written, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

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What evidence is there to verify this tremendous claim of Christ to forgive sin? Is it witnesses we want? Heaven is full of them. "I saw, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands. . . . These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It would appear that all these reached heaven by faith in Christ; as he said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Do you ask for more witnesses? If this were a case in court how many would satisfy you? There are some hundreds of millions now living on earth who are prepared to say, "This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him and saved him out of all his troubles," and to sing,

> "Oh, happy day that fixed my choice
> On thee, my Saviour and my God!
> Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
> And tell its raptures all abroad."

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" That is a fair question. A tourist in the Alps or in Normandy sees crosses here and there and everywhere, bearing the inscription, *Spes Unica,* that is, "The only hope." I know of no other hope. In all the philosophies of the ages there is no sug-

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gestion or intimation of any method of blotting out the record of a sinful past. Here is the "fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins," which — so it is claimed — cleanseth from all sin. If that be rejected, where shall we turn? If a man hides his face from Christ as the Saviour, where else shall he look for salvation? Is there any other that has the words of eternal life?

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SECTION XI

"The resurrection of the body."

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It kindles all my soul,
My country's loveliness! Those starry choirs
That watch around the pole,
And the moon's tender light, and heavenly fires
Through golden halls that roll.
O chorus of the night! O planets, sworn
The music of the spheres
To follow! Lovely watchers, that think scorn
To rest till day appears!
Me, for celestial homes of glory born,
Why here, oh, why so long
Do ye behold an exile from on high?
Here, O ye shining throng,
With lilies spread the mound where I shall lie:
Here let me drop my chain,
And dust to dust returning, cast away
The trammels that remain:
The rest of me shall spring to endless day!

— *Casimir.*

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"THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY"

THERE are two ways of disposing of a difficult doctrine; one is to deny it outright, and the other — much cleverer, less ingenuous, but equally effective — is to explain it away.

In the Church at Corinth there were some who undertook to treat the resurrection of the dead in that manner. They could not deny it without disloyalty to Christ; but they could sophisticate it. This they did by affirming that the Resurrection is not a literal resurrection of the body, but simply a survival of the soul with a perpetuity of influence behind it.

When Paul preached this doctrine to the Corinthians, he found it necessary to meet this sort of sinister reasoning: "But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own."

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The argument is in the nature of a parable; and in this parable of the grain of wheat a clear light is thrown upon the question, "How are the dead raised, and with what manner of body do they come?"

I. The grain of wheat does not really die. It is not annihilated, even though the animating germ is destroyed within it; for the conservation of matter is scientifically as true as the conservation of force. The analogy of the parable holds so far only as the vital germ is conserved. In this case that which is apparently death is the very assurance of life; as Jesus said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

In our mortal bodies there are possibilities of life which cannot be realized here and now. The body must pass through mortality before it can attain to the glory of immortality. It must "shuffle off this mortal coil," as the grain lays aside its husk, before it can truly live. Thus we interpret the words of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

II. The grain of wheat comes forth from the ground. It is buried, lost to sight for a while. Then it reappears: first a spear of tender green, afterward a sturdy stalk shooting up into the sunlight. The body reappears in like manner. The trumpet

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shall sound: and all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Lord and shall come forth, as Lazarus heard and came forth at the call of the incarnate Son of God.

III. The stalk that issues from the sepulcher of the grain is not merely a reduplication of it. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be."

So is it with the resurrection of the body. It does not come forth "cast in the same mold." As the grain becomes a stalk bearing the burden of a thousand grains; as the bushel of wheat becomes a harvest to feed the hunger of a multitude; so is the contrast between the body which was laid away in the sepulcher and that which issues from it.

IV. The resurrection body will be a spiritual body, adjusted to the conditions of its higher life: since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

(1) "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory."

The dishonor of the fleshly body is due wholly to sin; and there will be no sin in the kingdom of God. Nor will there be any of the sorrows that are attendant upon it. "God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." The beauty of holiness will be our beauty there.

(2) "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power."

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The body must needs be raised in power in order to be fitted to its higher sphere. For its greater tasks in heaven it will need clearer eyes and stronger hands. It will no longer be hampered by the limitations of time and space.

Our tasks are often wearisome by reason of the infirmities of the flesh; but in heaven we shall be equipped with powers adequate to all the service required of us. It is recorded that, during the captivity in Babylon, a great prayer was made by Daniel for the deliverance of the people; and he said, "While I was speaking in prayer, the man, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he talked with me, and said, . . . At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee!" That is, the angel had come all the way from heaven, in that moment of prayer, to answer him! The speed of a wireless message through the vastness of ether was thus outdone. Who knows, then, what shall be the multiplied energies of those who, out of fleshly weakness, are made strong in the glory of the endless life?

(3) "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption."

The sure approach of dissolution is written on the face of every living being. The moment we begin to live we begin to die. But there our bodies shall be endowed with self-perpetuating life. At the

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blast of the trumpet all who awake in Christ shall drink of the Fountain of Perpetual Youth.

V. The resurrection body will be the same that was laid away in the grave.

For "to every seed is given its own body." The farmer, after sowing his wheat, goes out and waits for that which shall be. Will he look for rye or barley? No, for wheat, always for wheat; because the law of nature is "Each after its kind." The seed of the sowing is always recognized in the harvest that is gathered in.

So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The identity of the body will be preserved because of the vital germ within it.

But what do we mean by "identity"? There is an identity like that of Niagara, where there is a constant change of substance with continuance of form. There is an identity which consists in sameness of substance, as when you dissolve a silver chalice in *aqua fortis* and, by the use of proper chemicals, recover every particle of it. There may be an identity without the persistence of either form or substance: my hand is the same as that which rested on my mother's bosom in infancy; yet, since the body is in a state of constant flux, neither the form nor the substance of that hand is here; nevertheless my mother would know it.

We cannot, therefore, speak dogmatically in these premises, and particularly as we are in the presence of a mystery; but by the parable of the grain of

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wheat we are warranted in saying that the resurrection body preserves its identity by virtue of the vital germ or informing principle within it. So far forth the teaching of Scripture is clear. The identical body that is buried shall "come forth." This is involved in the term "resurrection," or rising again. The physical body has a vital connection with the spiritual body, a connection so close as to assure its identity with it.

The point of importance is thus maintained: to wit, that those who come forth in the resurrection shall be recognizable; and to us, as to those Corinthians who lamented their martyred dead, this is a source of immeasurable comfort. We want to know each other in heaven; to the end that we may not sorrow as those who are without hope. It does not content us to think of our translated friends as disembodied spirits in the realms of infinite space; as one of the poets puts it:

"Somewhere, in desolate wind-swept space,
In Twilight Land, in No Man's Land,
Two hurrying Shapes met face to face
And bade each other stand.
'And who are you?' cried one agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light,
'I do not know,' said the other Shape,
'I only died last night!'"

No; we shall have our loved ones and recognize them as our very own. Wives and husbands, after

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years of separation, shall look into each other's faces with unspeakable joy; and the little children that slipped out of our arms long ago will be given back to us.

VI. The analogy is that of Christ's resurrection body.

The beloved disciple who had lain upon his bosom in the upper room saw him afterward in Olivet with the glory of the resurrection in his face and as the heavens opened to receive him. And years afterward he saw him again at Patmos, but so glorified was he that John could scarce believe the sight. But the glorified Christ laid his right hand upon him, saying, "Fear not! *I am* the Living One; and I was dead and behold I am alive forevermore!" He was the same, changed yet recognizable. Our identity will be preserved in the same way.

Of this transfiguration our Lord himself is the pledge and surety. Paul says, "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep." As the Jewish farmer brought his first sheaf of wheat or basket of olives and waved them before the altar of the Temple, as a prayer for the harvest and a prophecy of the ingathering; so is Christ become the first-fruits of all that sleep in him.

The teaching of the Scriptures as to the physical resurrection is beyond all question. On the occasion of Christ's miracle at Bethesda he said to the cavil-

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ing scribes and Pharisees, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth!" It is obvious that in this and similar teachings he does not refer to the spiritual resurrection; for *there is something that comes forth out of the grave; and that something can be nothing else but the body which was buried in it.*

It cannot be said that revelation leaves no residuum of mystery with reference to this doctrine. But the fact is affirmed beyond all peradventure; and through the mystery there shines the brightness of a glorious hope. "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be *like him:* for we shall see him even as he is."

Since Jesus is mine I'll not fear undressing,
  But gladly put off this garment of clay:
To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing,
  Since Jesus to glory through death led the way.

Thus not only the salvation of our souls, but the resurrection of our bodies, is assured in Christ. And in this we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

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Section XII

"And the life everlasting: Amen."

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In soul, man mounts and flies;
In flesh he dies:
Not that he may not here
Taste of the cheer;
But as birds drink, and straight lift up their head,
So may he sip, and think
Of better drink
He may attain to after he is dead.

— *George Herbert.*

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"AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING"

IS it to be supposed that the woman of Sychar understood what Jesus meant when he spoke of "living water" of which if one drink he "shall never thirst,"— which shall be in him "a well of water springing up unto eternal life"? No, she was simply bewildered. Hear her: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep." Indeed, the well was deep; deeper than she dreamed; as deep as the unfathomable love of God! A rope and a well-sweep could not avail; but the Man in homespun, sitting there on the curb, had made bare an omnipotent arm to draw it.

What is the eternal life? I wish I knew and could unveil it; but "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

The woman of Sychar lived in a valley circled about by the everlasting hills. She looked across the summit of Ebal and dreamed of the Great River and its mysteries; or beyond Mount Gerizim where, now and then, a golden mist rose from the Great Sea. No doubt there were occasional strangers

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who came with news from beyond; but the Beyond was all Wonderland to her.

So do we dwell in a little world, hemmed in by the circumscription of time and space, absorbed in the petty affairs of shop and household, with only guesses for the universe of God. Of one thing we are sure: we are larger than the world we live in. We were born for greater things than grinding at the mill. Hence the racial, unquenchable thirst for life, more life, eternal life!

But alas, our longings travail to no birth; and life itself awaits a definition. All heaven is full of saints triumphant who have emerged from the shadows and know; but when they come back to our valley, as "ministering spirits," they always come with their fingers on their lips.

There are, however, some things that we know about it.

I. To begin with, *Everlasting Life is a fact.*

One of the oldest of proverbs is "Nature never deceives." It is upon that postulate that Socrates reasoned out the problem of immortality. "If this be a dream," said he, "let me still dream on, and awake to disappointment, rather than suffer from the haunting fear that death ends all! But this is no dream; since there is no appetite without provision made for supplying it. How, then, will you explain this thirst of mine, unless there be water somewhere to quench it?"

II. We know, moreover, that *Everlasting Life*

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is more than immortality; that is, the mere continuance of our present life.

To breathe and eat and drink, to rise in the morning and address ourselves to the round of common tasks, to come home weary under the heat and burden of the day, and lie down again and sleep and wake and resume the treadmill — this does not content us. Nevertheless, however flat, stale and unprofitable this mere existence, it must go on. I am immortal and cannot help it. I am immortal because the divine breath is in me. There is no folly comparable with that of the man who commits suicide in order to escape from life. "Out, out, brief candle; life's but a walking shadow"? Nothing of the sort. Life cannot be extinguished that way. The tenant may move out of his tabernacle of flesh, but he merely moves on.

III. We know still further, that whatever this Everlasting Life may be, *it has some vital relation with God.* "We came out from him," as Augustine said, "and will never rest until we rest in him." We have lost our birthright, and can only regain it by getting right with God.

So it is written, "This is life eternal, to know God"; that is, to be in harmony with all his beneficent plans and purposes concerning us; to be true to the divine law, which is the law of our being; to rest under his complacent smile; to have no cloud of separation between our souls and him.

How speaks the thirst within us? "As the hart

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panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!" Ah, nature never deceives. Our dry-lipped souls cry as with an articulate voice for a drink from the well beside the gate of God!

IV. And another thing that we know about this spiritual and eternal life is that, *if it ever begins, it must begin here and now.* Indeed, that is what we are here for.

It is impossible to explain this handbreadth of uncertainty and incompleteness that we call life — this confusion of threads and thrums, of unrealized ideals and unrighted wrongs — unless it be a mere introduction to something further on. All the hills are leveled and all the crooked places made straight, if eternity open up before us.

But if this life is probationary, there must be a Statute of Limitations; that is to say, our probation must end. Were it not for that, death would have no terrors. Death is the line where character is crystallized; and as the tree falleth so also shall it lie. Thus it is written: "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." Wherefore it behooves us, as men contemplating a long journey, to make suitable provision for it.

V. Still further, we are advised that *this Everlasting Life begins in Christ.*

It was for this reason, and for no other, that he

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came into this world of ours. "I came," he said, "that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." This is precisely in line with what he said to the woman at Sychar, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

Let us not suppose, however, that this wonderful life, here or in heaven, is the same for all. In some particulars this is doubtless true. The saint who occupies the lowest seat in heaven is as free from the record of past sin as the one who stands nearest the throne. He is equally delivered from the consequences of sin: since there is no pain nor sorrow there and no farewells. And before the lowest also is an immeasurable vista of progress, from grace to grace and from glory to glory, forever and ever.

But this does not mean that glory is on a dead level. A snail and an eagle are both alive and happy in their way; but a snail crawls while an eagle soars and kindles its undazzled eyes at the noonday sun.

To the penitent thief who lived but an hour of humble faith, the promise was given, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise!" Thanks be to God for the omnipotent grace that, "betwixt the saddle and the ground," can save a sinner in that way! But think you his Paradise could measure up to that of Paul, who after a long and eventful life of toil and peril in his Master's service — a veteran bearing about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus —

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bowed at the headsman's block, closed his eyes and opened them in the presence of his Lord? Oh, no; incredible! The snail crawls out of danger, but the eagle flies to the bosom of God.

A Christian woman rears her household so heedlessly that, one by one, her loved ones slip away into by and forbidden paths until, at length, she comes up alone before God. Think you her joy will be like that of the mother who has trained her children in the sanctities of the Covenant, so that she finally gathers them all in with the words, "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me!"

A Christian man of wealth is so reluctant to part with his treasure at the Master's call that, when he goes to heaven, it is by the narrow margin of a needle's eye; while another, knowing that his possessions are not held by ownership but by stewardship, uses them accordingly, making for himself friends by the mammon of unrighteousness, who give him welcome at heaven's gate. It will surely be a different sort of heaven to those men.

If so, inasmuch as heaven with all its felicities begins on earth, it behooves us to prepare for it. For the spiritual life, of which we are speaking, is like the unbroken current of a river which presently turns a bend and vanishes from sight, but flows right on.

Now, as to the practical bearing of all this. It makes a great difference in our manner of life whether or no we believe in the life further on. It

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formulates our plans for to-morrow and the next day. It strikes the keynote of our behavior at home, in society, in the shop and office and marketplace, in all our contact with those about us.

In one of the cemeteries of Philadelphia there is a tombstone bearing this epitaph:

"The Body of
B. Franklin, Printer,
(Like the Cover on an old Book,
Its contents torn out
And stript of its Lettering and Gilding,)
Lies here, food for worms;
But the Work shall not be lost:
For it will (as he believes) appear once more
In a new and more elegant Edition,
Revised and corrected
By its Author."

Thank God for the assurance of the "new edition, revised and corrected by its Author!" Here we rejoice in life, but there — O men and women, great things are before us! "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be."

In addition to the fact that our view of the Everlasting Life has a practical bearing on our manner of living here and now, it must be observed that it greatly modifies our conception of death. If we are to continue to live without any interruption, then one who has entered upon the higher life may regard

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death as a mere line of shadow falling across his way: or to use the words of Longfellow, "a covered bridge, leading from light to light through a brief darkness." Death as a motive is reduced to the vanishing point. It has lost its sting. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory over it! Life is the momentous thing. It is far more solemn to live than to die; for life eternal is what life temporal makes it.

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"AMEN"

BUT before we say "Amen" let us know what it means. Our Lord said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." We have been repeating "Amen" ever since we learned it at our mother's knees. It is a universal word; the Hebrews and Greeks used it and pronounced it just as we do.

When the children of Israel came over the border into the Land of Promise they pitched their camp in the broad valley of Ephraim; and as the blessings and retributions of the Law rang to and fro between Ebal and Gerizim they responded with a loud "Amen." What did they mean by it?

When the Ark of the Covenant — the symbol of the divine Presence — was brought up to Gibeon by King David and placed within the Tabernacle, a Psalm composed for the occasion was sung responsively by the children of Asaph: "Seek ye Jehovah and his strength; seek his face evermore. Remember his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, . . . saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance. . . . Sing unto Jehovah, all the

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earth; show forth his salvation from day to day. . . . Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name: bring an offering and come before him; worship Jehovah in holy array. . . . Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good; for his loving-kindness endureth forever." And again the people, with one accord, responded "Amen!" What did they mean by it?

When the Temple of Solomon was dedicated a procession of priests and Levites brought the Ark of the Covenant up to the Holy of Holies, singing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory will come in," and King and people and antiphonal choirs all responded "Amen." What did they mean by it?

The custom was continued after the institution of the Christian Church. Paul says that the Christians of Corinth were wont to respond in this manner to the prayers of the minister; and Jerome says that in his time the people followed the various parts of the public service with "Amen and Amen." What did they mean by it?

In our childhood, kneeling at our trundlebeds, we said, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep," and closed our simple petition in the same way. When we repeat the Lord's Prayer we seal it with "Amen." Is this a mere perfunctory word? Has it become so familiar that its edge is entirely worn off? Would it not be well to inquire as to the meaning of it?

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I. In connection with prayer, what does it signify?

Sincerity, to begin with. Its literal meaning is, "So be it," that is to say, "I really desire the things I am asking for." And this is the matter of chief importance when we kneel before God. It is an easy thing to say our prayers but a very different thing to pray. You will remember Gratiano's masque of devotion, "I will put on a sober habit, talk with respect, wear prayer-books in my pocket. Nay, more, while grace is saying I will hood mine eyes thus with my hat, and sigh and say Amen."

But God cannot be deceived in that way, for he understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. He cares nothing for our bowings and genuflections and well-turned phrases. The chanted *misereres* of the Pharisees wait without, while the unstudied cry of a penitent publican pushes its way to the heavenly throne.

But the Amen of prayer means more than sincerity; it implies the expectation of faith. As Jesus said, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Wonderful promise! "If — anything — believing — ye *shall* have it!"—"For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."— Wherefore the word means not only, "So be it," but "So it shall be." Yet how often we plead for a blessing without expecting it.

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In Dr. Guthrie's "Life and Letters" he says that in a time of drought he prayed at the family altar one Sabbath morning for the early and the latter rains to come down speedily on the dry and thirsty land. The bell presently began to ring and, when the Doctor set out for the Old Barony, his little daughter came running after him with an umbrella. "Oh, no, my dear," said he; "there isn't a cloud in the sky." Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings we are taught the simplicity of faith.

Too often we pray as mischievous boys ring door-bells and run away for fear some one will answer them. Thus we betray our doubt of the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

II. We say Amen when we repeat the Apostles' Creed. And there again it means sincerity. "So I have said; and, God being my witness, I believe every word of it."

If so, how is it that some people are so industriously engaged in explaining it away? God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit; the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection — all these doctrines are twisted out of their plain significance, as in a recent examination of candidates for the ministry in the Presbytery of New York — and then "Amen" is ushered in, like a jester to amuse the judicatory with cap and bells.

In such a case the scruples of Macbeth should set one thinking. He says of his conference with the

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two assassins: "One cried, 'God bless us,' and 'Amen' the other. As they had seen me with these hangman's hands, listening their fear, I could not say Amen when they did say 'God bless us.' I had most need of blessing; and Amen stuck in my throat."

But the Amen of the Creed means more than sincerity: it implies consistency also. It is as if one said, "Not only do I thus believe; but thus I propose to live."

A creed on parchment has no value: it is important only when translated into life and character. It is like food which, on the table, satisfies no hunger, but properly eaten and assimilated is transmuted into nerve and sinew and intellectual strength and efficiency. The Amen of a creed is the breadth of holy purpose which makes it a living thing with eyes to see the world's need, ears to hear the behest of duty, and feet and hands wherewith to go about doing good. It takes the algebraic x out of the problem of life, reducing it to the known terms of love toward God and our fellow-men.

In the provision made by the Jewish Rabbis for the conveyance of property occurs this singular sentence: "The estimation of a field shall be according to the fruit thereof." In other words, the value of a field was not to be determined by its area but by its yield in bushels of grain. Our professions of faith are to be measured in the same way. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Not every one

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that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

III. It is our custom, moreover, to seal with the word "Amen" our Covenant on entering the fellowship of the Christian Church. Here again it means sincerity, as if one said, "This solemn pledge is no mere form; I mean it."

In the historic revival at the Water Gate, where the returned captives kept the Passover and renewed their vows of loyalty, Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God; and all the people answered "Amen and Amen." With a like purpose did we enter on the responsibilities of the Christian life, saying, "High heaven, that hears the solemn vow, that vow renewed shall daily hear." Do we still so deeply, cordially, sincerely feel it?

But while the Amen of our Covenant sounds the lowest depths of emotion, it rises and radiates and suffuses all the higher surfaces of life. It permits no reservation in our commitment to the service of Christ.

At the siege of Fort Donelson, when General Buckner asked for an armistice that terms of capitulation might be discussed, the memorable answer of Grant was, "The only terms that can be considered are unconditional surrender." And these are the only terms on which Christ receives us. We must

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needs pass under his yoke. "Subjugation" is the word; from *sub-jugum,* meaning under the yoke. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

There are no conditions in this surrender. There can be no reservation of any small back-chamber in the heart of a man. There can be no cherishing of a darling sin. There can be no withholding of any moment of time, any atom of strength, any farthing of earthly treasure. All or nothing! "Thee my new Master now I call, and consecrate to thee my all." This is the Amen of the Covenant. Paul says it is "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (II Cor. 10:5.)

But there are two parties to every Covenant. God as the "party of the first part" meets us more than half way with two great Amens; as it is written, "God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." (Heb. 6:18.)

One of these "immutable things" is the Word. Its promises are Yea and Amen. The Bible is the one book in the world's literature that speaks without ifs or perhapses or peradventures. Its affirmations all rest in a "Thus saith the Lord." And on its last page burns this beacon: "If any man shall

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add unto these God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from its words God shall take away his part from the tree of life. . . . Yea, I come quickly, Amen."

The other of the immutable things is God's oath: and his oath is Christ, in whom he certifies, "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." The other name of Christ is, "The Yea and Amen; the Faithful and True Witness." He speaks with authority: "Amen, Amen, I say unto you." And when he speaks, the last word is spoken as to spiritual and eternal life.

Between these two Amens — the written and incarnate Word — we stand as between Jachin and Boaz, the pillars of the Temple, saying "So be it." We rest in the authority of the immutable, binomial, complete and final Word of God.

Oh, this is a wonderful word! The saints in heaven have not forgotten it. In the visions of the Apocalypse they are heard saying, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the dominion, forever and ever, Amen." May we be there to join in that Amen! But if we are, it will be because we attune our hearts to utter it here and now.

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